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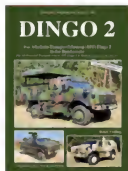
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New Effects and Paints from MiG Productions

MiG Productions is working on a new selection of effects and paints.

The latest products are two Fantasy pigments, red tones, that will create futuristic weapons effects on sci-fi models; three washes to duplicate create moss and vegetation (Moss Green) effects, mud splashes (Mud Splash) and an interesting effect for damaged glass (Dirty Glass) that will be useful for fans of ruins and decaying buildings.

In addition, MiG Productions have released a chipping package: Absolute Chipping. With this product you can obtain any kind of chipping, from the smallest to the biggest. All you need is inside the jar.

Thanks to MiG Productions for the information and images www.migproductions.com



Armory June and July Releases

Armory has announced a large number of new releases in June and July:

- AR ACA7246a - 1/72 Kh-29L (AS-14 "Kedge"-A) + AKU-58-I catapult launcher, Air to Surface missile, laser guidance
- AR ACA7246b - 1/72 Kh-29T (AS-14 "Kedge"-B) + AKU-58-I catapult launcher, Air to Surface missile, television guidance
- AR ACA7248a - 1/72 Kh-59 "Ovod" (AS-13 "Kingbolt") + AKU-58-I catapult launcher, Air to Surface missile, television guidance
- AR ACA7248b - 1/72 Kh-59M "Ovod-M" (AS-13 "Kazoo") + AKU-58-I catapult launcher, Air to Surface missile, television guidance
- AR ACA7305 - 1/72 M134 "Minigun" 0.3 cal. 6-barreled machinegun, Aircraft turret version (2 pcs.) universal
- AR peA7210 - 1/72 XB-70 Valkyrie exhaust nozzles (Italeri)
- AR AC7241 - 1/72 M134 "Minigun" 0.3 cal. 6-barreled machinegun - AFV version
- AR AC7278 - 1/72 Pz.Kpfw.VI Tiger commander cupola (early)
- AR AC7280a - 1/72 T-34 rear hull plate mod.1940 (KhPZ plant)
- AR AC7280b - 1/72 T-34 rear hull plate mod.1942 (plant No12)
- AR AC7280c - 1/72 T-34 rear hull plate mod.1942 (plant No183)
- AR AC7280d - 1/72 T-34 rear hull plate mod.1944 (plant No12)
- AR AC7280e - 1/72 T-34 rear hull plate mod.1944 (plant No183)
- AR pe7238 - T-34 captured, PE set universal
- AR M72103 - 1/72 KRAZ-2558 Soviet off-road cargo truck
- AR M72201 - 1/72 T-27 soviet WWII light tank
- AR M72210 - 1/72 Pz.Kpfw.II Ausf.L Luchs
- AR M72303a - 1/72 T2-B-2558 Soviet modern airfield refueller on KRAZ-2558 chassis
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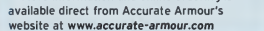
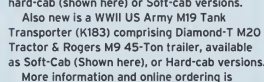
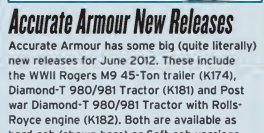


ZVEZDA NEW TOOL KITS

Zvezda is keeping busy with a number of newly tooled kit releases, all available now:

- 1/72 scale Soviet 76mm gun with crew. Item No. Z6145
- 1/72 scale German Mountain Troops. Item No. Z6154
- 1/72 scale Sd.Kfz.222 - German Reconnaissance Vehicle. Item No. Z6157

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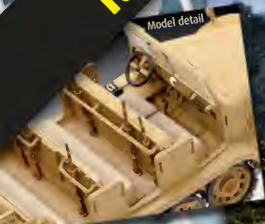
Accurate Armour New Releases

Accurate Armour has some big (quite literally) new releases for June 2012. These include the WWII Rogers M9 45-Ton trailer (K174), Diamond-T 980/981 Tractor (K181) and Post war Diamond-T 980/981 Tractor with Rolls-Royce engine (K182). Both are available as hard-cab (shown here) or Soft-cab versions.

Also new is a WWII US Army M19 Tank Transporter (K183) comprising Diamond-T M20 Tractor & Rogers M9 45-Ton trailer, available as Soft-Cab (Shown here), or Hard-cab versions.

More information and online ordering is available direct from Accurate Armour's website at www.accurate-armour.com

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Also available: 8.8cm Flak in 1:72 03174

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First introduced in 1938, the vehicle could carry gun crews of up to 12 men in theatre-style seats, under which was plenty of storage space for their tools and equipment. The rear section had an enclosed compartment that could be used for carrying ammunition, although a second ammunition carriage was preferable.

While produced in large numbers, there were never enough to fully equip the German

forces. Typically, the artillery elements of Panzer and Panzer Grenadier units received them, while others continued to rely on horses to draw their guns. However, later variants of the Sd.Kfz. 7 were developed as self-propelled anti-aircraft platforms featuring both 20mm and 37mm guns.

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Build Your Dream!



Think Tank - Panzerjager Tiger (P) - Ferdinand and Elefant



Dr. Ing. Ferdinand Porsche and other military and government officials inspect the second PzGefw VI (P) prototype at the Nibelungenwerk plant before shipping the tank to Kummersdorf proving ground for initial testing.

Bruce Culver describes the Panzerjager Tiger (P) family of Heavy Tank Destroyers - the Ferdinand and the Elefant.

PANZERJAGER TIGER (P) FERDINAND AND ELEFANT

Perhaps improbably, the history of the heavy self-propelled Panzerjager we know as the Ferdinand and Elefant began on 3 September 1939, in the early hours of World War Two, when Dipl. Ing. h. c. Ferdinand Porsche was named chairman of the Panzerkommission, which had the responsibility of overseeing development of all German armoured vehicles. In this position,

Dr. Porsche was able to exercise a great deal of influence over future tank design, and also had the ear of the Führer, Adolf Hitler.

Another aspect of Porsche's heading the commission was that he was then made aware of all the independent programs assigned to various German industrial concerns for the development of new armoured vehicles. He learned of a number of projects being awarded to other firms, and was interested

in having his company engage in the design of new tanks as well. Starting in 1941, the Porsche engineering firm in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen was eventually given contracts for work on six major new vehicles and derivative types.

Regrettably for the German military, Porsche's design work was done largely outside the authority of Wa Pruef 6, the ordnance section responsible for guiding vehicle development

and coordinating the designs to the needs of the troops in the field units. As a result, many of Professor Porsche's designs were functionally inferior to those of the competition (for heavy tanks, the firm of Henschel und Sohn in Kassel, Germany). In addition, Dr. Porsche was one of the major influences on Hitler's desire to field ever heavier, bigger gun tanks, which reached its height with the gigantic 188-ton Maus.



This is the second of two test vehicles completed by Alkett (Chassis 15001), used by Wa Pruef for testing, at the Kummersdorf proving ground. It has the belted-on extra armour but no external armour shield on the gun mantlet. This is the configuration used on the Panzerjager Tiger (P). It carried the name "Ferdinand" in honour of Dr. Ing. Ferdinand Porsche.



Except for the two test vehicles built by Alkett, all the Ferdinands were assembled in the Nibelungenwerk in St. Valentin, Austria. This shows the final assembly area, and most of these vehicles were largely complete.



This Panzerjäger Tiger (P) Ferdinand (Chassis IS0100) was the last of the production run, and in typical factory practice it was decorated with chalked markings and inscriptions by the assembly plant workers. At this point, the superstructure was still in the overall red primer.



This rear view shows some details of the chalked markings and inscriptions on Ferdinand IS0100. The tree boughs were a good luck symbol and were often added to significant milestone vehicles during production. The Ferdinand had few details on the rear hull area.



Three new Panzerjäger Tigers (P) leave the Nibelungenwerk prior to being issued to their unit. For the planned attack on the Kursk sector, the Germans assigned all 89 completed and available Ferdinands to one unit – sPz.JagRgt 656, composed of two sPz.JagAbt. 653 and 654.



Three Tiger I (P) chassis were reworked with Maybach HL 120 engines and built as Berge-Panzer VI at Nibelungenwerk in August 1943, too late for the Kursk summer offensive in which many Ferdinands were abandoned or blown up when they could not be recovered.

Another factor in the development of Porsche's prototypes was that he could design what he wanted without the military holding him to acceptable fielding standards. That is, he was not constrained to allow for the realities of military logistics or supply, and some of his design features proved to be beyond what the German Wehrmacht could operate and maintain in the field. Dr. Porsche had less experience in military tank design than some of his competitors at Krupp or Henschel, and some aspects of his

approaches were not as successful.

For example, many of Dr. Porsche's tank prototypes were relatively long and narrow, which greatly restricted their manoeuvrability, especially the ability to turn in small circles. This limited the usefulness of some of his designs as they could not manoeuvre well in rough terrain. One result was the excess strain on the tracks from side loads as the Porsche vehicles attempted to turn in place (as the Henschel Tiger could), and one result of this was that in soft ground, the side

movement of the tracks often tore up the ground, bogging down the vehicle. This was a problem with the Panzerjäger Tiger (P), as early in its career there were no suitable heavy recovery vehicles.

Perhaps the best-known difference in Porsche's independent designs from those of the other German armament manufacturers was his preference for air-cooled engines and electric drive power trains. Dr. Porsche felt that mechanical transmissions would not be as reliable in heavy armoured vehicles as electric drive

systems, and most of his own designs followed this concept.

In practice, the electric systems proved troublesome and not as durable as well-designed mechanical transmissions. Interestingly enough, US Army Ordnance developed an electric drive version of the T20 heavy tank family, the T23. Although it was the fastest version and had the best automotive performance, the US Army did not adopt it due to logistical concerns over operation and maintenance of the unique electric drive system. ►



The standard method for transporting armoured vehicles was by rail. To prevent damaging the chassis and power train on long road marches. Here a Ferdinand destined for Russia shows the usual methods of blocking the tracks with lumber to prevent shifting during travel. The small tent was made from three or four triangular 'zeltbahns', the shelter quarter carried by all soldiers.



Think Tank - Panzerjager Tiger (P) - Ferdinand and Elefant



Two Ferdinands, seen in a long column of vehicles advancing during the Kursk offensive, show the distinctive reticulated camouflage scheme used by s Pz-Jag Rgt 656 - olive green wavy lines over a dark yellow base. Mud and dust often covered the camouflage and the markings.



The Ferdinand was a large vehicle and provided a large palette for camouflage and weathering. Here dust and mud have obscured the pattern on the upper superstructure. Note the light area on the hull side where the missing front tool box was located.



This Ferdinand of the 1st company of s Pz-Jag Abt 653 moves to the front on 4 July 1943, the start of the Kursk offensive. Note the variation in the camouflage scheme compared to previously seen examples. The large slab sides made the Ferdinand hard to conceal except under cover.



Depending on the location, southern Russia could be a quagmire of mud or a dustbowl, as seen here. The Ferdinand could travel at up to 35 km/h (22 mph) on good roads.



In spite of the long ground track on the Ferdinand, it was susceptible to bottoming out in soft mud. The four 18-tonne Famo heavy recovery tractors seen here were the standard recovery vehicles for the Ferdinand and the also new Tiger I and Panther tanks.



The weight of German heavy armoured vehicles was a problem throughout the war, as most bridges were not strong enough to support them. This view of a Ferdinand that has broken through a bridge shows the early roof details seen at Kursk in 1943.



This Ferdinand, "623", was part of s Pz-Jag Abt 654, which was organized as II/s Pz-Jag Rgt 656 for the Kursk offensive. The majority of Ferdinands lost at Kursk suffered mine damage to the suspension or mechanical failure in the drive train.



This Ferdinand was a command vehicle of II/s Pz-Jag Rgt 656 (s Pz-Jag Abt 564) and appears undamaged. The drive train was more troublesome than expected and a number of the Ferdinands broke down and had to be abandoned as there were insufficient recovery assets to save them.

◀ TOWARDS THE PORSCHE TIGER

Dr. Porsche's work on a prototype started in December 1939, for a medium-heavy tank in the 20-30 ton range and mounting a 7.5cm L/24 howitzer. During the succeeding months, Wa Pruef 6 advised him on the required specifications for armour thickness, size restrictions for transportation, crew spaces, weight, and other factors. Work thus continued on this first design, the Porsche Typ 100. Krupp received the order for the armour hulls, and then proposed to design a turret for the new tank, mounting a larger gun.

After some time, the 8.8cm L/56 gun, based on the barrel of the 8.8cm Flak, was selected as the best compromise. Porsche referred to the new tank design as

the VK 30.01 while Krupp called it the Pz.Kpfw VI (Porsche). Krupp was ordered to build a wooden mock-up of the turret with the 8.8cm gun, which was delivered. In any event, only one soft steel prototype was completed, and the turret was never installed on the Typ 100 test chassis. Note that the decision to incorporate an 8.8cm tank gun was made months before the invasion of Russia, and the appearance of the T-34 and KV-1.

The Typ 100 chassis had a gasoline-electric drive system, powered by twin 210 HP air-cooled engines designed by Porsche and built by Steyr-Daimler-Puch in Austria. The engines drove generators that supplied power to electric motors driving each track drive sprocket. To preserve space inside the narrow hull, Porsche designed a new suspension system

that used longitudinal torsion bars in housings outside the hull articulating the suspension through bevel gears to change direction. It was a simple, very compact design, and was the suspension layout the Porsche firm used for their later heavy vehicle designs, though it had some disadvantages compared to conventional lateral torsion bar systems. The six road wheels on each side were paired on three suspension units, and this was carried over to the next larger design, the Typ 101.

Work on the Typ 100 chassis was cancelled in mid-1941 and the effort was redirected to a heavier new prototype, the Typ 101, which was designated the VK 45.01 (P) "Tiger." Though very similar to the earlier prototype, the VK 45.01 (P) was much more heavily armoured (100mm of frontal armour, side

armour of 60mm). The Krupp turret intended for the Typ 100 was retained, with the 8.8cm L/56 gun, but the front armour was now 100mm and the circular side armour was 80mm thick. The weight was over 45 tonnes, requiring more powerful engines and modifications to the power train and the chassis itself.

The drive components and the engines were moved to the hull rear and the turret was moved forward to balance the vehicle. The engines were increased to 310 HP each with larger generators, and larger electric motors for the drive sprockets were installed. The road wheels were redesigned to incorporate internal rubber shock absorption with steel tires to reduce wear. Similar wheels were later used on a variety of armoured vehicles.



The Russians captured a large number of the Germans tanks and armoured vehicles left on the Kursk battlefield. This damaged example shows how effective the thick frontal armour was against Russian anti-tank guns. Colours are olive green stripes over a dark yellow base colour.



Ferdinand "501" of s Pz.Jag Abt 654 was captured intact and then later used as a target. Later photographs show extensive suspension damage and multiple shell hits to this side. A number of Ferdinands, Panthers and Tigers were tested this way after the battle.



This Ferdinand was disabled by a mine and left behind as the Germans retreated. The Porsche suspension was more susceptible to damage than the torsion bar type on the Tiger I and Panther.



This Ferdinand was destroyed during the fighting and suffered a fire and ammunition explosion, blowing open the forward engine section and part of the left superstructure side. Lacking a secondary machine gun defence and having limited mobility, Ferdinands were often overwhelmed by numerically superior forces.

TWO TIGERS

Another factor in the development of the VK 45.01 (P) was Hitler's insistence on having a competition between the Porsche and Henschel firms for the design and production of the new heavy tank under the "Tigerprogramm." Each firm was to provide six prototypes for testing at the Kummersdorf proving ground, and the tests began in July 1942, although deliveries were somewhat piecemeal due

to production and automotive problems. Initial experience with the Porsche prototype VK 45.01 (P) showed that the early Porsche-designed engines broke down after only a few dozen km of driving, with extremely high oil consumption.

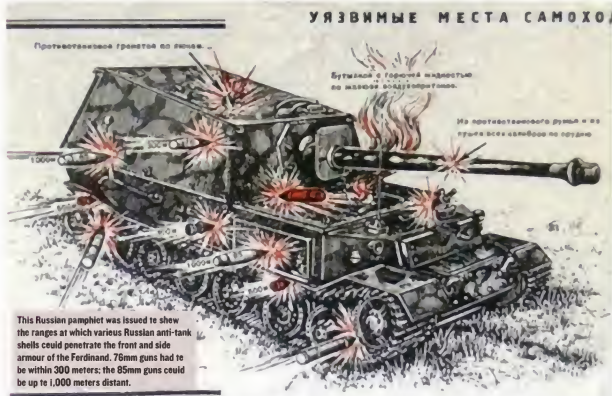
Both the Porsche and Henschel Tiger prototypes were plagued with mechanical problems, including engine and power train failures and fires, but the Porsche models suffered more faults and some

of those appeared intractable. A major problem was engine cooling, as was also an issue with the Henschel entry, but in the end, the Henschel machine was more reliable and seemed to have a better chance of being improved to correct its defects. It also used a regenerative steering system that allowed it to turn around in place, which the Porsche entry could not do because of its greater length. Henschel was awarded the

contract for the PzKpfw VI "Tiger" and in late November 1942, the Porsche VK 45.01 (P) was cancelled. Normally this would have ended the project, but the ordnance department had ordered 100 hulls and 100 (8.8cm) turrets from Krupp in July 1941, and had contracted for guns, engines, electrical components and for final assembly at the Nibelungenwerk in St. Valentin, Austria. Most of this material had been produced and a number of vehicles had been assembled when the VK 45.01 (P) was cancelled. There had been a companion proposal to build the Porsche Typ 102 with a hydraulic drive system, but only one vehicle was completed and tested.

AN EXPEDIENT SOLUTION

The Porsche Tiger hulls and chassis components were too valuable to scrap, and in November 1942, it was agreed that 90 of the VK 45.01 (P) Tiger chassis would be extensively modified and built as heavy Sturmgeschütz, mounting the new Pak 43 8.8cm L/71 anti-tank gun modified to fit into the vehicle superstructure. Revamping the program led to issuing a number of the Tiger (P) prototypes as test targets for weapons development, and a few more for automotive testing. Three hulls were modified in 1943 as Berge-Panzer VI heavy tank recovery vehicles, three were rebuilt as Ramm-Tiger ram tanks ▶



This Russian pamphlet was issued to show the ranges at which various Russian anti-tank shells could penetrate the front and side armour of the Ferdinand. 76mm guns had to be within 300 meters; the 85mm guns could be up to 1,000 meters distant.



Think Tank - Panzerjager Tiger (P) - Ferdinand and Elefant

with very heavy carapaces over the hulls for bringing down buildings and other large structures, and the last complete Tiger (P) was outfitted for combat and issued to s Pz-Jag Abt 653 as a Panzerbefehlswagen command tank for the unit commander.

The remaining 91 chassis were rebuilt by moving the engines and power train equipment to the center of the hull. The troublesome Porsche engines were replaced with the proven Maybach HL 120 TRM used in the PzKpfw III and IV. The rotating turret was replaced with a large fixed casement at the rear of the hull. Frontal armour was 200mm and the side and rear armour was 80mm, providing excellent protection. The 8.8cm Pak 43/2 L/71 main gun was mounted in the centre of the superstructure front plate. A large circular hatch was centred in the rear plate and there were pistol ports for observation and small arms defence on both sides and the rear plate. However, there was no secondary machine gun fitted, a lack that was to prove costly later, and no cupola for the vehicle commander.

Altk completed two vehicles for trials and the other 89 were completed at Nibelungenwerk in St. Valentin, Austria. There were a number of names and designations given the project as cover, and one of them stuck: "Ferdinand", in honour of the designer, Dr. Ferdinand Porsche. The official designation was Panzerjager Tiger (P) (8.8cm Pak 43/2 L/71) Sd.Kfz 184, but it has come to be known as the Ferdinand.

The Ferdinand served with only one unit, s Pz-Jag Rgt 656, a regiment assembled for the attack on the Kursk salient in July 1943. It consisted of s Pz-Jag Abt 653 (I/ s Pz-Jag Rgt 656) and s Pz-Jag Abt 654 (II/ s Pz-Jag Rgt 656), each with 45 new Ferdinands in three companies, 14 Ferdinands per company and three in the headquarters platoon. In the 653rd, the three HQ Ferdinands were assigned to the third company.

The regiment travelled by rail to the Orel-Kursk area and assembled for the attack. The initial part of the assault was to follow Pz Kp (Fkl) 314, a radio-control unit operating Borgward B IV remote control demolition vehicles to clear paths through Russian mine fields. Unfortunately for the German forces, there had been delays in getting "Operation Citadel", the Kursk offensive, underway. The Russians had figured out an attack was likely and had made extensive preparations. Heavy Soviet artillery fire prevented the proper clearance of mines and a number

of the Ferdinands were disabled in the first days of the offensive. Some had to be blown up as they could not be retrieved, though others were saved.

The German offensive stalled after several days and the Ferdinands then assumed the role of long-range tank destroyers as the Russians mounted a series of counterattacks. In this role, the superb 8.8cm Pak 43 was the perfect weapon, accurate and able to knock out any Russian tank out to over 2,000 meters, well outside the effective range of Russian tank guns. s Pz-Jag Rgt 656 began to run up an impressive score of destroyed enemy vehicles. By the end of the regiment's time in the Kursk battle, the Ferdinands had put over 320 Russian tanks plus many dozens of guns and other vehicles out of action.

The intense combat again highlighted the design deficiencies of the Ferdinands. In soft ground, they often bogged down, and there were continuing problems with the drive trains. Shrapnel entered through the open grills on the engine deck, setting a number of Ferdinands on fire. The lack of a commander's cupola rendered vehicle crews virtually blind, as opening the defensive pistol ports invited Russian snipers. More serious was the lack of a secondary machine gun, as most crews had little defence against Russian anti-tank infantry teams who were advancing with the Russian tanks.

There were a number of ad hoc attempts to deal with the tank hunter-killer teams. Some Ferdinands had crude wood platforms added to the hull rear for small groups of Panzergranadiers to serve as defence against the Russian infantry, and at least one crew adopted the novel idea of locking the main gun breech open, and having the gunner sight the Pak 43 on Russian infantry as another crew member fired an MG 42 down the barrel!

In the end, the German forces were worn down by Russian attacks that gradually retook the hard-won ground. As the Germans retreated they were forced to blow up or sabotage abandoned heavy tanks they could not recover. Yet other Ferdinands were captured intact but often disabled by mechanical failures. Similar fates befell the Tiger Is and Panthers that also had been first used in combat at Kursk. A number of these types were used as targets for testing new and existing Russian tank and anti-tank guns, and some were displayed in Moscow and other larger cities to show the Russian population that their side was winning. Yet

Generally, the 200mm thick front armour was proof against all Russian anti-tank weapons in 1943. This was hit over a dozen times by various weapons and was not penetrated in front.



Derelict vehicles littered the Kursk battlefield and other battle sites for months and sometimes years. Most of these wrecks were recovered to provide steel for new Russian tanks.



To bolster morale among Russian citizens, captured German weapons were put on display in Moscow and other large cities, where people could come and see the enemy equipment. This example has been the target of much after-the-battle practice shooting.



This Ferdinand of 1st company, s Pz-Jag Abt 653, survived the battle of Kursk and was used in the fall campaign in Russia. It is seen here near Saphorashye in October 1943.



This is another Ferdinand that survived the Kursk battle - only half the Ferdinands were lost and the remainder served on the Russian front until they were recalled in the late fall of 1943 to be rebuilt and improved for continued service.



s Pz-Jag Abt 653 was re-formed in late 1943-early 1944 and equipped with the Ferdinands that had survived. The vehicles were rebuilt and modified, adding a commander's cupola and a bow mounted MG 34 and a coating of Zimmerit anti-mine paste. The 1st company served in the Anzio-Nettuno area of Italy in 1944, where this example was captured.





The Ferdinand had been renamed "Elefant" at Adolf Hitler's suggestion in late November 1943, but the name change had nothing to do with the new modifications. Even with a new name, the Elefant still had the old mobility problems, as this abandoned example in Italy demonstrates. In addition to drive train issues, the suspension proved to be less robust than other terrain bar types.



This abandoned Elefant shows why the Porsche suspension for this vehicle was a concern. Damaged by a mine, this vehicle sits with the front axle jamming the tracks and no way to rig the suspension up off the tracks to allow the vehicle to be towed. As a result, many Elefants in Italy were placed in fixed defensive positions to delay the Allied advance, which they often did.



Destroyed by a fire and explosion in the engine section, Elefant "124" served in the Anzio-Nettuno area of Italy in the spring of 1944. The soft ground and hilly terrain were unsuitable for the Elefant and most of the vehicles were lost or disabled in fairly a short period of time.



The 2nd and 3rd companies of s Pz.Jag Abt 653 were sent to the eastern Poland/Russian sector in April 1944. Here are some Elefants on a special heavy Panzer supply train. Intended for transporting heavy tanks to the front.

there were only a few Ferdinands that had been destroyed by anti-tank weapons. The majority were disabled by mechanical failure and damage from mines and artillery. In return, they had destroyed many hundreds of Russian tanks and guns.

AN ELEFANT OUT OF THE ASHES

s Pz.Jag Abt 653 had lost 13 of its Ferdinands plus others disabled, but s Pz.Jag Abt 654 had suffered much higher losses, turning over their 19 surviving Ferdinands to 653 before traveling to France for re-equipping with the new Jagdpanther. s Pz.Jag Abt 653 then had about 50 Ferdinands and was detailed to provide anti-tank support for German troops during the retreat to Dnepropetrovsk, then the Zaporozhye bridgehead, and finally the area around Nikopol-Krivoi Rog. Because of the high maintenance requirements of the Ferdinand, the unit had no more than 14 vehicles at any one time. In November, s Pz.Jag Abt 653 was withdrawn and sent to St. Valentin and Vienna in Austria to reform the unit. The battalion re-equipped with rebuilt Ferdinands, now renamed the Elefant at Adolf Hitler's suggestion. The name change was not related to the modifications to the vehicle.

The Elefant had a number of improvements over the Ferdinand. A bow-mounted machine gun was fitted for secondary defence and the commander was given a

modified StuG III cupola for all-round vision and the capability for using a spotting scope. Tools were rearranged and the engine deck grills were redesigned to protect the power train from shrapnel from artillery bursts, the hull and lower part of the superstructure received a coat of Zimmerit anti-mine paste, and the deflector shield over the gun mount was reversed.

BACK INTO ACTION

The serious conditions on several fronts did not allow s Pz.Jag Abt 653 to reform as one unit. The first 11 Elefants that were completed were assigned to the 1st company in February 1944 and rushed to the Anzio beachhead area in central Italy, where they served at Anzio and Nettuno and surrounding areas. The soft ground and hilly terrain were unsuitable for the Elefant's overtaxed chassis and many of them were placed in reserve to preserve them for later use. During the German retreat from the Anzio area, damaged or disabled Elefants were sometimes placed in defensive positions with good lines of fire, where they could halt Allied advances until being destroyed by air strikes or artillery.

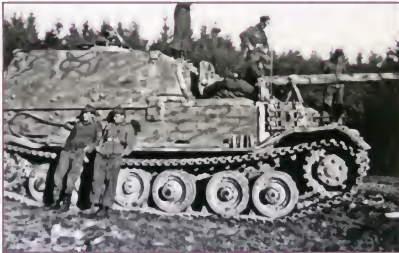
The 2nd and 3rd companies of s Pz.Jag Abt 653 were equipped with the reworked Elefants and in April 1944, entrained for the Tarnopol region in southeast Poland, where they did not do as well as expected due to the soft wet ground. 653 went into reserve for the rest of

the spring. In May, the lone Tiger I (P) appeared as a command tank. In July 1944, the Russians opened their great summer offensive in southern Poland, driving the Germans back. As they retreated, s Pz.Jag Abt 653's Elefants again proved how valuable they could be in the defence as their long-range anti-tank fire took a terrible toll on the advancing Russian forces. However, there wasn't time to retrieve damaged or broken down vehicles and gradually the unit's strength fell. Elefants were lost to enemy fire, mechanical breakdowns and also the lack of suitable bridges, which occasionally trapped vehicles at river crossings where they had to be blown up. In July, s Pz.Jag Abt

653 lost 19 Elefants and in August, the rest were all transferred to the 2nd company, the 3rd company returning to Germany to re-equip with the Jagdtiger, along with the 1st company from Italy. The 2nd company was re-designated as 614. schwere Panzerjäger Kompanie in December 1944, and was fought down to four serviceable Elefants by the end of January 1945. Recalled to Germany, the 614. s Pz.Jag Kp was assigned to the defence of Berlin, where the last two operational Elefants were captured by Russian troops on May Day (1 May) 1945.

LEGACY

The legacy of the Porsche Tiger (P) and the Ferdinand/Elefant ▶



Many German vehicles were painted at the factory but local units were responsible for altering the camouflage to match local conditions. This Elefant of s Pz.Jag Abt 653 has a hasty application of olive green wavy scribbled lines over a dark yellow base colour.



Think Tank - Panzerjager Tiger (P) - Ferdinand and Elefant



This crew portrait shows the changes made to the Elefant compared to the Ferdinand. Note the Zimmerit anti-mine paste coating and the new bow mount for an MG 34. The unit sign for s Pz-Jag Abt 653 is on the front superstructure plate.



The heavy mud on the Russian front in the spring taxed the over-extended power train of the Elefant and many vehicles broke down. A good driver could avoid much of the trouble by easing into power settings and gear changes. Trained crews were a necessity for reliable operations.



During lulls in action, replenishing ammunition was needed to maintain load levels in each vehicle. The Pak 43/2 L/71 main gun was also used in the Tiger II, and used a very long large shell casing. This is an Elefant from the 3rd company, seen in the eastern Poland area.



One prototype Tiger I (P) was fitted to a complete combat standard and issued to a Pz-Jag Abt 653 for use by the unit commander. It served from April 1944 to July, when it was lost in action. Note the unit emblem on the nose plate.



Tiger I (P) "003" was the commander's vehicle for s Pz-Jag Abt 653, the only Porsche Tiger model to see active combat action. Note the rough Zimmerit coating, possibly applied by the unit itself and not at the factory.



Tiger (P) "003" used chassis 2500i3 and turret IS0014, assembled at Nibelungenwerk in early 1944, and was completed as a Panzerbefehlswagen (armoured command vehicle). Note the basket behind the cupola for signal flags. Again the Zimmerit doesn't show up well in this view.

is certainly mixed. The basic vehicle and chassis designs had fundamental flaws that no amount of adjusting could overcome. While the crews fought with courage and often real ingenuity in compensating for the problems with the vehicles, the poor cross-country performance and mechanical difficulties did limit the usefulness of these massive weapons. At the time they were

built, in relatively small numbers, the high use of copper was not a problem, but mass production on the order of the Panther would have exposed Germany's shortage of raw materials and supply bottlenecks in the system.

Dr. Porsche's true contribution to the German tank industry was the excellent torsion bar suspension developed for the Pz.Kpfw III ausf E in 1938, a design

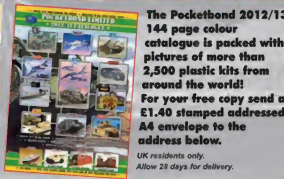
so successful it was copied almost part for part by US Ordnance and used in a number of later war US tank designs. As it was, the main lasting influence of German tank design was the basic layout and five-man crew, and the balance of gun and armour on the better types like the Panther. The true progenitors of the modern main battle tank were Russian tanks like the T-44, the KV series, and

the IS heavy tanks, and the US T20 family of heavy-medium tanks, and lastly the British Centurion. These featured space-engineered hulls, integrated power packs placed in the rear hull, rear drive and chassis designs favourable for good speed and fire control. Their descendants are found today in virtually all the armies of the world. ■

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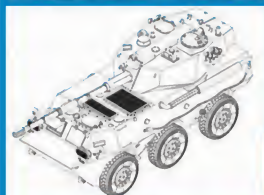
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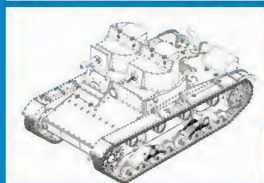
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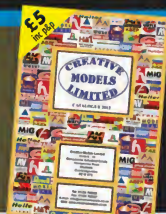


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THE ELEFANT IN THE ROOM

The Editor gets hold Tamiya's brand-new 1:35 scale Elefant and reacquaints himself with the lost art of zimmerit.

After releasing their all-new Jagdtiger back in 2008, I suppose it should have almost been expected that Tamiya would also eventually tackle Germany's original tank destroying behemoth, the Ferdinand. Even so, I was surprised and pleased to see this new Elefant in Tamiya's list of forthcoming releases.

The hallmarks of Tamiya's recent military releases have been a high level of detail, clever engineering, simple parts breakdown and trouble-free construction. Tamiya has brought all of these attributes to their new 1:35 scale Elefant.

I was so excited to see the new kit that I started cutting parts off the sprues before I counted them. I can tell you, however, that the parts are presented on five sprues of typically Tamiya dark yellow plastic, with a further 96 track

links and lengths on four brown-coloured sprues.

The hull is presented in one large piece with the floor, lower and upper sides plus sponsons all moulded integrally. Similarly, the big superstructure is moulded in one piece. The rolled armour plate features subtle but convincing pitting – some of the best texturing that I have seen from Tamiya.

Tamiya seems to have made a special effort to minimise ejector pin marks on this kit. Traditionally, the danger areas have been the insides of hatches and the back face of track links. On this kit, there are literally no moulding marks anywhere on the tracks, and those on the insides of the driver's and radio operator's hatches are so faint that they should not be a problem.

Smaller detail parts such as handles, tow cable guides and the gun barrel travel lock are

delicately moulded.

The simple suspension units will be workable if you take care while applying cement. The wheels and drive sprockets are all held in place with polythene caps.

The tracks are a highlight of the kit. They are made up from a combination of individual links and five different lengths. The lengths are moulded with curves in place – either up or down depending on their final position on the track run. Not only are the front faces of the tracks well detailed, but the edges with their track pin are very impressive too.

The plastic parts are rounded out with three crew figures – a driver, a loader and the Commander. They are all well moulded and the facial detail is particularly nice.

The only multimedia in the kit is a length of string for the two tow cables. With no headlights and the ▶



The hull is supplied in one piece, including covered sponsons.



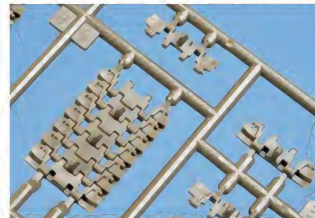
The big one-piece superstructure.



The Elefant features subtle and convincing pitting on the rolled steel surfaces.



Link and length tracks are included – Tamiya's best to date in my opinion.

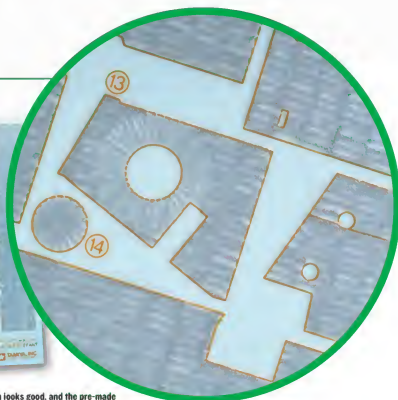
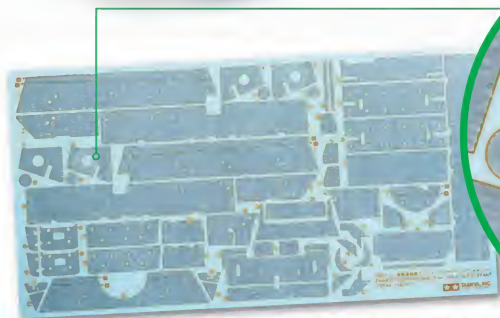


There is not a hint of ejector pin marks, even on the back of the track links.



Three markings options are included – one in Italy and two from the Eastern Front.

MT M

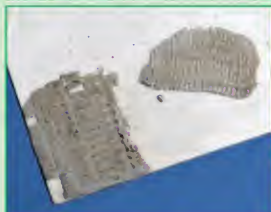


Tamiya offers the option of a self-adhesive zimmerit upgrade. Two patterns are included on the one printed sheet.

The pattern looks good, and the pre-made zimmerit will certainly be faster to install (and present less risk) than DIY zimmerit.



It has been 15 years since I last attempted zimmerit, so I tested out some new products alongside other old favourites on a piece of scrap plastic.



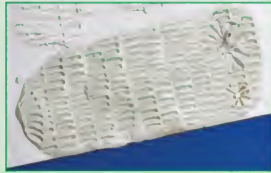
First was Gunze-Sangyo's Pro-L two-part epoxy putty. This was a bit coarse, with the grain slightly visible when the putty was dry. It also tended to stick to the zimmerit tool more than the other putties.



White Milliput is another two-part epoxy putty. This is finer than the Gunze putty, and if the surface was kept wet, it did not stick to the tool.



Tamiya Putty is a one-part solvent-based putty. The putty formed a skin soon after being applied to the plastic, but remained wet underneath. The effect does not look good here, but I suspect that better results are possible by modifying the application and zimmeriting techniques.



Tamiya Epoxy Putty Smooth Surface is, in the immortal words of Goldilocks, just right. This two-part epoxy has the smoothest surface of all that I tried, and was also the least likely to stick to the zimmerit tool. It remains workable for at least 30 minutes after mixing too - very handy.



Last century, I used photo-etched trowels and saws to apply zimmerit patterns in putty. This time around, I also experimented with a set of cast metal zimmerit stamps, and a 2.4 mm precision metal screwdriver. The screwdriver won.

◀ only grille being virtually invisible behind a heavily undercut exhaust housing, clear and photo-etched parts are not really required.

Three marking options are provided - one based in Italy and two from the Eastern Front.

The instructions are well laid out over 17 steps with clear illustrations supplemented by text directions where required. The section dealing with the tracks is especially well done.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ZIMMERIT

The Elefant was essentially a reconditioned and improved Ferdinand.

During 1943, the Ferdinand tank destroyer on the Eastern Front suffered from mechanical problems that were compounded by poor visibility and the lack of any close defence weapons. The large smooth steel surfaces were also a magnet - quite literally - to infantry-placed explosive charges. The surviving Ferdinands were therefore withdrawn and rebuilt with more reliable engines, a modified Panzer III cupola with all-round episcopes vision, and a bow mounted machine gun. Zimmerit coating was also applied to combat magnetic charges.

The bottom line is that all Elefants wore a coat of zimmerit. If you want your model to be accurate, you'll need to add a zimmerit coat using one of three methods:

- Do it yourself with putty and your favourite zimmerit application tool
- Adapt a commercially available resin zimmerit set to this new kit,
- Use Tamiya's self-adhesive zimmerit set made especially for this model.

The easiest of these solutions will be Tamiya's self-adhesive zimmerit. The various zimmerit segments are printed onto a textured vinyl sheet, and feature two different patterns. The zimmerit looks great on the sheet, and the depth of the pattern means that it should show up well on your model under a coat of paint. All you will need to do is cut the sections from the sheet, punch or cut out the circles to accommodate the conical bolt heads, peel off the backing and apply them to your model. Voilà! Instant zimmerit!

...AND I'LL TAKE THE LOW ROAD

I am almost inevitably enticed by the easiest option, so I really should have used the Tamiya self-adhesive zimmerit. However, I hadn't attempted a custom-made zimmerit finish in around 15 years, so I thought that this would be the perfect opportunity to try some

new products and techniques.

Last time I applied zimmerit, I used Squadron White Putty (a solvent-based putty in a tube) and a photo-etched Tamiya zimmerit tool - essentially a saw-toothed trowel that is dragged across the damp putty to create the zimmerit pattern.

In the intervening decade and a half, many new products have hit the market. Before I risked the model, I tried out a few putties and tools on a piece of scrap plastic.

First was Gunze-Sangyo's Pro-L two-part epoxy putty. This was a bit coarse, with the grain slightly visible when the putty was dry. It also tended to stick to the zimmerit tool more than the other putties.

Next up was White Milliput, another two-part epoxy putty. This is finer than the Gunze putty and if the surface was kept wet, it did not stick to the tool.

Tamiya Putty is a one-part solvent-based putty similar to the Squadron White Putty that I used last century. The putty formed a skin soon after being applied to the plastic, but remained wet underneath. The effect did not look very good at this first attempt, but I suspect that better results will be possible by modifying the application and zimmeriting techniques.

Tamiya Epoxy Putty Smooth Surface is, in the immortal words of Goldilocks, just right. This two-part epoxy has the smoothest surface of all that I tried, and was also the least likely to stick to the zimmerit tool. It remains workable for at least 30 minutes after mixing too - very handy. I decided that this would be the zimmerit material for my Elefant.

I also experimented with a set of cast metal zimmerit stamps and, following a discussion with TMMI Editor Marcus Nicholls, a 2.4 mm precision metal screwdriver. I was very pleased with the effect of the screwdriver in soft putty, but my experiment showed that I would have to roll the putty very, very thin in order to obtain a convincing zimmerit finish.

Before applying putty to the plastic, the bow armour plates and the rear hull parts were glued to the kit's main hull tub. Tamiya has indicated the zimmerit demarcation on the superstructure by a very faint raised line. Tamiya tape was used to mask immediately above this line.

Let the zimmeriting begin.

I'VE GOT BLISTERS ON MY FINGERS!

Tamiya Epoxy Putty is made up from two flat strips, one white and one pale grey-green. I took an



Before commencing, the superstructure was masked along the faint raised line with 10 mm Tamiya tape.



Equal proportions of each strip of Tamiya Epoxy Putty were mixed thoroughly into a pale green ball before being rolled flat on greaseproof paper using a glass jar. The jar was kept wet during the rolling process to help stop the putty sticking to it. A tiny spot of detergent helps too.

“I am almost inevitably enticed by the easiest option, so I really should have used the Tamiya self-adhesive zimmerit...”



A thin sheet of epoxy putty is laid onto the side of the superstructure and pressed onto the surface with a damp fingertip.



The zimmerit pattern is created simply by repeatedly pressing the tip of a 2.4 mm screwdriver into the soft putty.

equal portion from each strip and rolled them together, then rubbed the ball of putty briskly between my palms. The warming action of the rubbing helps soften the putty and speeds the mixing process. Once the putty was the shape of a long snake, it was rolled back into a ball and rubbed between the palms again. This was repeated several more times. Only when the putty is blended into a single colour is it ready to be used.

The mixed putty is quite sticky, so our working surfaces must be very smooth. I laid out a sheet of greaseproof paper, and chose a glass jar as my rolling tool. I added a tiny drop of dishwashing liquid to the outside of the jar and kept it wet through the process. The ball of mixed putty was squashed and rolled using the jar, peeling the putty from the glass and re-wetting both the putty and the jar before rolling it thinner.

When the putty was as thin as I could manage, it was cut into shapes that would fit onto one side of the superstructure and then pressed onto the plastic. Pressing the putty not only improves adhesion, but also makes the putty thinner still.

Now it was time to apply the pattern to the putty. I removed the masking tape from that side of the superstructure and pressed the screwdriver into top corner of the soft putty. I applied the tip of the screwdriver at a 45 degree angle, and worked down the first column, one indentation at a time. With the first column done, I started the second, and the third, and so on.

The process was repeated for all the panels that needed zimmerit.

The sealed vision ports and the conical bolt heads featured a starburst zimmerit pattern. This was simply applied with a 1.4 mm screwdriver after the regular

columns were finished.

By the way, don't forget to drill out the locating holes through the new coat of zimmerit before you fit the superstructure to the hull.

Applying zimmerit with two-part epoxy putty and a screwdriver is undoubtedly a time-consuming technique - I spent around 12 hours over two days on the zimmerit alone - but I was reasonably pleased with the final result.

However, by the end of the process my thumb and fingertips were red raw from pressing onto the narrow metal handle thousands of times over the two days!

MOVING RIGHT ALONG

With the zimmerit in place, the balance of construction could get underway. Being a tank destroyer without a turret, the gun and the superstructure were simple and fast to build.

Similarly, the running gear of the Elephant is quite simple, so these components built up quickly too. The suspension units were glued to the hull, and the wheels pressed onto the axles via the polythene caps.

The instructions would have you fit the track guards and mudguards at this stage, but I recommend that you wait until after you have installed the tracks.

In my opinion, these link and length tracks are Tamiya's best yet. I always liked Tamiya's approach to link and length tracks because they are quick to assemble and they represent a good solution for sagging runs, but the level of detail - especially on the edges - is particularly impressive in the case of this kit.

The instructions offer clear and accurate directions to installing the tracks. My only additional advice would be to make sure you take special care to keep track of the ►



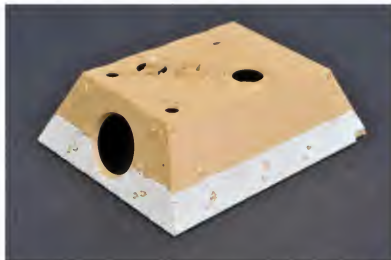
The same process was followed for the hull, but a rough circle was cut around each of the conical rivets was cut away before the Zimmerit pattern was applied.



In addition to the vertical columns of Zimmerit, the conical rivets were surrounded by a starburst pattern. This was applied with a 1.4 mm precision screwdriver.



Although most of the Zimmerit is arranged in vertical columns, the port side hull features long horizontal rows. This variation was typical of vehicles reconditioned at the Mibelungen works in Austria, and was often seen on Elefants serving on the Italian front in early 1944.



The Zimmerit pattern on the superstructure. The putty on the sides was allowed to set before the Zimmerit was applied to the rear of the superstructure.



Zimmerit was also present on the rear hull, the exhaust cover and the stowage box. Locating slots and holes were poked through the Zimmerit before the hull was glued to the superstructure.



Top: The suspension units are workable, so use your glue sparingly.

Middle: Road wheels and drive sprockets are all fitted with polythene caps.

Bottom: The workable suspension units attached to the lower hull sides.



The wheels and drive sprockets are pressed into place. Alignment is perfect, and all the road wheels touch the ground at the same time!

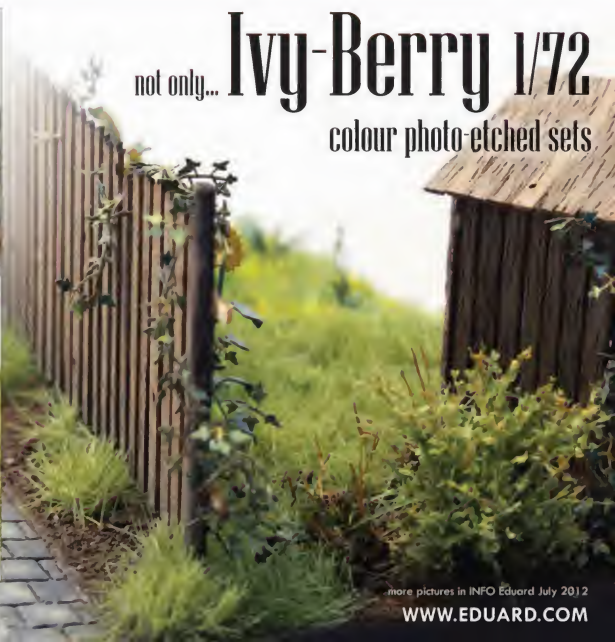


73439 Sunflowers, slanechnic 1/72



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There is no interior detail, but the gun mount features a simple and effective mechanism that permits elevation and traverse.



The gun mount fitted to the superstructure. Make sure that this is firmly glued in place.



Superstructure mounting plates had zimmerit applied while they were still on the sprue. This made those small pieces easier to handle.

The superstructure and hull were glued together using Tamiya Extra Thin Liquid Cement and Revel Contact glue. A large plastic twin clamp was used to press the parts firmly together while the glue set.

The instructions would have you fit the track guards and mudguards at this stage, but I recommend that you wait until the tracks have been installed.

The lower front of the starboard side track guard was bevelled to a thin edge, as the starboard mudguard would be omitted from my model.

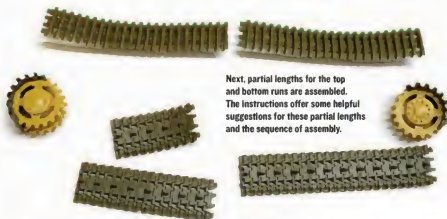




The tracks were fitted one side at a time. Here, all the parts required for one side have been cut from the sprue and carefully assembled by part number. You really don't want to get these mixed up!



First, the individual links are wrapped around the drive sprockets.



Next, partial lengths for the top and bottom runs are assembled. The instructions offer some helpful suggestions for these partial lengths and the sequence of assembly.

“I always liked Tamiya’s approach to link and length tracks because they are quick to assemble and they represent a good solution for sagging runs, but the level of detail – especially on the edges – is particularly impressive in the case of this kit...”

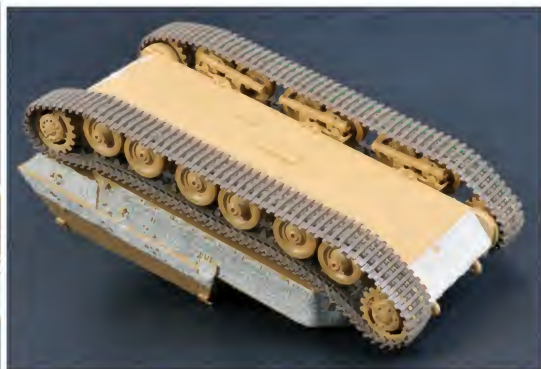


Left: The top forward run has been glued to the rearmost individual track on the front drive sprocket.

Middle: The second top track run has now been glued in place.

Bottom: Next up is the droopy lower front run. This is followed by the two bottom runs.

Below: A view from the bottom. The tracks fit really well and are admirably detailed, even along the edges.



◀ part numbers of the track lengths.

There is little more to say about the installation of the hull and superstructure fittings. I found fitting the intricate gun travel lock was a bit tricky to assemble (in fact, I managed to launch one of the small parts - B1 - into space, never to be seen again), but the effort was well worthwhile.

The final job was the tow cables. I super-glued 19 cm lengths of string into the cable ends, then filled the open slots with two-part epoxy putty. I mixed up Gator's Grip Acrylic Glue and water in a bottle cap, and ran the length of each string through this thick liquid. This stiffens the string as it dries, and adds to the Impression of weight.

While the string was still drying, I glued the ends in place and ran the cables through the guides on the hull sides.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE KIT

Once again, Tamiya has delivered a well-detailed and easy to build model of an iconic vehicle.

Tamiya is not resting on its laurels though. The improvements are evolutionary rather than revolutionary, but they are there. This time, ejector pin marks have been all but eliminated in visible locations, and in my opinion the

tracks are Tamiya's best yet. The facial features of the three crew figures are very good too.

It is nice that Tamiya has offered an easier option for those modellers who do not want to tackle a zimmerit finish themselves. The self-adhesive zimmerit sheet will be welcomed by many, but those who want a genuinely unique pattern can use putty and zimmerit tools instead. The instructions are quite clear about the patterns and demarcations of the zimmerit used on the kit's three marking options.

Tamiya's 1/35 scale Elefant is a great kit. Sit back, relax and enjoy the build! ■



Tamiya's string tow cables are dipped in a thick mixture of Gator's Glue and water. This will stiffen the string as it dries, and adds to the Impression of weight.



The end connector is glued to the hook on the hull side, while the still-wet string is threaded through the plastic guides.



The front of the tow cable is attached to the large eye on the front of the hull.



The gun barrel was added to the model. The travel lock was a bit fiddly to assemble, but looks great when it is finished.



Note the missing mudguard on the starboard side. This gives us a better view of the tracks and its characteristic drupe.



Various fittings, including spare track links and the somewhat tidily heat deflectors, have been glued to the back of the vehicle.

The unmistakable profile of Dr. Porsche's ill-fated heavy tank destroyer. An Elefant is in the room!



“Once again, Tamiya has delivered a well-detailed and easy to build model of an iconic vehicle...”



The driver's, leader's and Commander's hatches will not be fitted until the model has been painted.

Modelspec

Tamiya 1:35 German Heavy Tank Destroyer Elefant
Kit No. 35325

Accessories & Finishing:

Tamiya Epoxy Putty Smooth Surface
Tamiya Extra Thin Liquid Cement
Revell Contacta Plastic Glue
Selleys Super Glue
Mr. Surface 1000
Gator's Grip Acrylic Hobby Glue
Irwin Clamps (various sizes)
Historex Hexagonal Punch and Die Set
Evergreen Plastic Card

- ✓ Excellent detail; superb fit; easy build; probably Tamiya's best link-and-length tracks to date; minimal ejector pin marks.
- ✗ Nothing worth mentioning.

Available from

Thanks to Tamiya Japan for the sample
www.tamiya.com
Tamiya kits are distributed in the UK by The Hobby Company Limited www.hobbyco.net
Available Worldwide from all good model shops.

Rating ●●●●●●●●

Next time, Brett paints the model and adds a crew.



THIRD GEN, IDF-STYLE

The Merkava Mk.3D is the latest of the Third Generation variant of this well known Israeli Main Battle Tank.

The Merkava 3D was a significant development compared to the Mk.2. A new 120mm smooth bore gun was installed in a wider and more heavily armoured turret, which features an electrical control system. Additional applique armour was also fitted to the turret. A state-of-the-art Fire Control System was introduced to later Merkava 3Ds, but was also retrofitted to the earlier tanks. The hull was redesigned and up-armoured. A new 1200

horsepower air-cooled engine was mated to a new transmission, resulting in improved performance. Crew comfort and protection are enhanced with an air conditioner and NBC filtering system.

Other improvements introduced following fighting on the Lebanon border include the introduction of vision blocks for the Commander and wire mesh guards for optics and headlights.

Meng Models is the first company to release a Merkava Mk.3D in 1:35 scale, and they have done a very impressive job.

The kit comprises more than 500 parts, including individual track links. The main kit parts are moulded in a greenish grey plastic, while the track links are presented in the seemingly ubiquitous shade of "track brown".

Parts are crisply moulded with sharp raised detail. The lower hull is a one-piece tub, while the turret reflects the multi-part construction of the real thing. Applique armour features recessed lines and lovely raised details including bolt heads, tie-downs and latches. Indeed, detail throughout the kit is excellent.

Meng offers the option of either all-steel or rubber-tyred road wheels. According to the instructions, a mixture of steel and rubber rimmed wheels might be fitted too. The road wheels are each made up from six pieces, including polythene caps for ease of assembly. The suspension is designed for flat ground only, as the nicely detailed springs are presented in solid plastic.

Detail parts are built up on the hull and the turret. The perforated vents, moulded in plastic, really look good.

Also impressive is the injection-moulded ball and chain armour hanging from the rear of the turret. Normally, ball and chain armour is presented in multimedia - often photo-etch or metal chains

The Editor takes a look at Meng Models' all-new 1:35 scale Merkava Mk.3D kit, and finds some interesting innovations under the lid.

- resulting in complex and time-consuming assembly. Meng has entirely bypassed any complexity by providing three simple panels of plastic balls and chains. They look very good too, and will be suitable for even less experienced modellers.

The M2 .50 cal and the loader's MAG machine gun are very well done. Hull and turret hatches are all separate but there is no interior detail.

Vision blocks, episcopes and the panoramic sight lens are provided on a clear sprue.

The individual tracks links are supplied loose in a plastic bag. They will be ready to assemble straight from the bag, with no clean up required.

What I believe is a first for a mainstream model, Meng has included lead sheet that may be used to represent the cloth marking panels on the turret.

Two marking options are offered:

Tank Gimel, 2nd Company (Wolves), 2nd Battalion, Barak (Lightning) Brigade, Lebanon 2006; and

Tank 10 Gimel, 2nd Battalion, Barak (Lightning) Brigade, Operation Cast Lead, Gaza, January 2009.

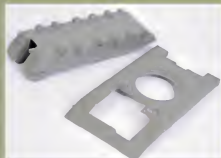
Both vehicles are finished in IDF Sandy Brown.

Instructions are presented in a 28-page booklet across 44 steps. Illustrations are clear, and although some of the assemblies are quite detailed, construction should not be too complicated.

The Merkava Mk.3D is a tough looking tank, and Meng Models has done a wonderful job representing its multi-faceted construction. This is an excellent model that will be warmly welcomed by fans of modern armour.

Highly Recommended. ■

Thanks to Meng Models for the sample www.meng-model.com



The main upper and lower hull parts.



Like the real Merkava Mk.3D, the kit's turret is made up from a number of different panels.



The applique armour is crisply detailed.



Side skirts are presented in one full length for each side.



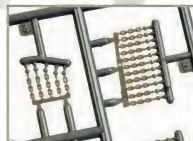
The loader's MAG machine gun is very well done.



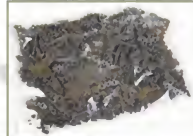
The tow cable ends feature hollow ends to accommodate lengths of string.



The perforated panels look great.



Ball and chain armour is presented in injection-moulded plastic - a simple and attractive solution to a sometimes complicated detailing problem.



The individual track links are supplied loose in a plastic bag. They will be ready to assemble straight from the bag, with no clean-up required.



Vision blocks, episcopes and the panoramic sight cover are all supplied in clear plastic.

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BRITISH LIGHT TANK MARK VI B



Scale 1:35

Item No. 80000

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THE CHARIOT

Anthony Sheedy takes one for the team, converting and updating Academy's 1:35 scale Merkava Mk.IV with resin accessories just as the LIC is released as a plastic kit!

This build was inspired after seeing a photo in a Military History Publications that showed R2D2 mounted on the turret of the formidable and most futurist looking of any of the world's heavy armour. The armour of course, is the Merkava IV (Hebrew for Chariot), and R2D2 turned out to be an anti-missile defence system appropriately nicknamed "Droid".

The Merkava IV started populating IDF tank battalions

from late 2004 and first saw action during the 2006 Lebanon War. Lessons learned during these battles and the following conflicts in Gaza 2008/09 saw the addition of several features to help protect against the urban hit and run warfare the IDF found itself involved in. This urban warfare also meant dealing with the threat faced by IDF armour from Hezbollah anti-tank teams equipped with the latest Russian anti-tank weapons,

which included RPG-29 and AT-14 Kornet. Post-action reports from 2006 determined these teams specifically targeted Merkava IV, and it was found poor tactics and the underestimating of the enemy's technical capabilities (based on the incorrect assumption that Hezbollah couldn't be equipped with such technologically advanced anti-tank weapons), contributed to the death of 10 valuable crewmen and the loss of 5 Merkava IVs (via IDF online source, liveleak quotes

slightly higher casualty numbers).

What I find intriguing, and also admire about IDF armour, is that you can see how their tanks have evolved based on the actual real world fighting they have been involved in. Every update is based on experiences learned and these updates are added to older models as they come back to the assembly line for their 0000 rebuilds, all in the name of crew survivability. The most recent example of this evolutionary process can be found



The Merkava IV must be the most futuristic of any of the world's heavy armour.



in the current "Trophy" Missile Defence System being retrofitted to initial models of the Merkava IV that have been returned to the factory for rebuild. The upgrades also include the Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) additions, which I have added to my model.

THE CHARIOT

The basis for this model is the excellent Academy Merkava IV, which I have thrown some Legend Productions updates tracks along with some scratch building and a few bits from the spares box.

Academy has done an excellent job on this kit, resulting in a distinctly Tamiya-esque quality feel to it. It builds up very quickly and easily, providing a great level of detail without being individual part heavy resulting in a time consuming build. The main drawback of the model is that it comes minus non-slip surface texture, however soon after completing this model Academy released an "LIC" version, which comes with most of the parts included in the Legend updates and non-slip texture! Again, the old modeller's adage rings true "if you want something released in plastic, scratch build, convert or build it out of resin first".

NON-SLIP TEXTURE

To achieve the non-slip texture, I masked certain areas of the hull and turret top, before spraying on Games Workshop texture paint, obtaining the desired grainy effect. The front and rear chassis numbers were made from slaters numbers and evergreen plastic strip and glued into position. The reference to match the correct chassis number to the tank came via the guys at ldf-modelling.com.

Adding the Legend Productions LIC conversion involves fitting of a loader's hatch, belly armour and some photo-etched screens to sights and periscopes. The conversion also included rear side skirt dust covers and a new barrel, however this was obviously undersized and unusable, so I ran with the kit barrel and just detailed it with missing bolt heads on the thermal shields and straps to hold the warping sensor at the barrels end. The Legend Productions turret and hull bins have nicely moulded tarps and identification placards, and fit perfectly to the Academy kit.

Academy's ball and chain armour (to protect the shot trap between the turret and hull against RPG attack) is okay, but really needs replacing with more to scale aftermarket options. The ones provided in the Legend kit are adequate, however for ease of assembly I use the Voyager offering. The main difference is that the balls are all separate with only the one mounting hole for the

The Academy kit was supplemented with a number of accessories and updates, including Legend Productions LIC upgrade.



The distinctive ball and chain armour comes from a Voyager update set.



This is the Droid from HardCoreModels. Plumbing and wiring were completed with the assistance from the helpful guys at ldf-modelling.com





To achieve the non-slip texture, I masked certain areas of the hull and turret top before spraying on Games Workshop texture paint.



The HardCorpsModels figure is one of the nicest IDF tank crewmen available.



It is a real pity that there aren't more like this figure on the market.



The .50 cal machine gun is improved with resin parts from Legend's LIC upgrade.

“The Legend Productions turret and hull bins have nicely moulded tarps and identification placards, and fit perfectly to the Academy kit...”

Additional armour plates for the LIC upgrade are also supplied by Legend Productions.





WWII Production tracks are fantastic, however they are also very fragile and care must be taken during assembly and mounting.

The model with all the accessories and improvements in place - we're ready for paint.

◀ chain, whereas the Legend ones are on a necklace arrangement which required cutting off each one. This leaves a short piece of wire in the ball, which is a pain to remove. Once removed one hole can be used for the chain while the other one needs to be filled. Ball and Chain armour is tedious, but well worth the effort for the finished result.

THE DROID

The HardCorpsModels' Droid was a straightforward build, however none of the wiring or wiring locations are provided. Thankfully the guys at idf-modelling.com again came to the rescue and I was able to plumb the Droid with a reasonable amount of accuracy. The Droid was then glued into place and detailed with the base plate mounting fins. Final details for the turret were to replace the aerial mounts with one from the

spares box and scratch build the right side wind sensor, which was overlooked by Academy, however is provided in the Hobby Boss version of the Merkava IV.

Lastly the WWII Production tracks were assembled, and then white glued into place on the model. In my humble opinion, these are the best Merkava IV tracks available, however they are also very fragile and care must be taken during assembly and mounting.

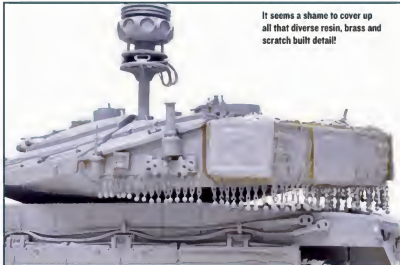
MERKAVA COLOURS

With the build completed, a coat of Tamiya Fine Grey Primer was applied to help the base colour stick as well as highlight any construction issues. Using the excellent "Merkava Siman IV" by Desert Eagle Publishing as reference, I realised that the colour of the Merkava IV varied greatly vehicle to vehicle, depending on the lighting conditions and amount

of dust and mud on the tank. I tried a mix of the Life Color Sinai Grey 035 with Vallejo flesh to fade it, but it didn't have that tinge of green seen in most of the photos showing Merkava IV, and in the end decided on a mix of Gunze H304 and Tamiya XF-20.

With the base colour down, several oil filters were applied before adding selective washes to

panel lines and raised details to add shadows and depth. A coat of acrylic gloss was then sprayed on to give the excellent Bison decals the best chance of settling in to their new home. The markings to complete this model came from the Bison Merkava IV sets 1 & 2, which in this case depicts the 3rd Tank 1st Platoon, 35th Company, 1st Battalion of the 401st Armour ▶



It seems a shame to cover up all that diverse resin, brass and scratch built detail!

Tamiya's spray can Grey Primer was applied overall.





A mix of Gunze H304 Olive Drab and Tamiya XF-20 Medium Grey was used as the base colour.



The entire model was covered from top to bottom in two shades of sandy coloured Rembrandt Pastel, before stabbing on lots of water over the top.



This allows the pastel to move around on the surface and fall away from the high points into the lower points, just as it would on the real vehicle.



Markings came from the Bison Merkava IV sets 1 & 2, which in this case depicts the 3rd Tank 1st Platoon, 351 Company, 1st Battalion of the 401st Armour Brigade 'Iron Trails'.



Aerials were made from brass wire and detailed with an Israeli flag to add a bit more colour and visual interest.



The HardCorpsModels IDF tank commander figure was painted in Vallejo acrylics before being given a slight dusting to tie him in with the tank.

Brigade 'Iron Trails'

Once the decals were dry, I dull coated the entire model and applied some more oil washes of buff, light and dark brown to aim for the dusty effect seen on these vehicles. A few layers of oils later and I wasn't achieving the level of dustiness I had in mind. I decided at this point to risk using pastel chalk to gain the dusty look I was seeking. I detest pigments as they are very hard to impossible to remove once on, but pastel chalk is a little more forgiving. I took the plunge and covered the entire model from top to bottom

in two shades of sandy coloured Rembrandt Pastel, before stabbing on lots of water over the top. This allows the pastel to move around on the surface and fall away from the high points into the lower points, just as it would on the real vehicle. Once dry I was quite happy with the result, and I was glad that I took the plunge. The tracks were given many coats of black and brown oil washes before being given the same pastel treatment as the tank, before finishing them off with silver and gun metal dry brush over the tread faces and guide horns.

The HardCorpsModels IDF tank commander figure was painted in Vallejo acrylics before being given a slight dusting to tie him in with the tank. This is one of the nicest IDF tank crewmen available and it is a real shame there aren't more like it on the market. Aerials made from brass wire and detailed with an Israeli flag to add a bit more colour and visual interest were the final touches.

CONCLUSION

The Merkava IV is an impressive vehicle in real life and doesn't lose any of this in 1:35 scale, where it

dwarfs other models on the shelf. With a couple of variants available from Academy as well as the very impressive Hobby Boss version, the Merkava is well represented in plastic.

If you are a glutton for punishment, Legend Productions also offer two versions in a full resin kit, which although is a slog to build, is well worth the effort for the results. IDF armour is a really interesting and varied subject, and for further reading go to idf-modelling.com ■

Modelspec

Academy 1:35 Merkava IV LIC Kit No. 13227

Accessories Used:

Legend Productions Merkava Mk.IV LIC Conversion.
Item No. 1179, Voyager 1:35 IDF Merkava Mk.IV LIC MBT with chains. Item No. PE35413,
HardCorpsModels 1:35 Droid,
HardCorpsModels 1:35 IDF Tank Commander,
WWII Productions 1:35 Merkava IV tracks,
Slayers Numbers, Evergreen plastic strip,
Bison Decals - Merkava IV sets 1 & 2

Paints & Finishing Products:

Games Workshop Texture Paint, Tamiya Fine Grey Primer, Lifecolor Acrylics - Sinai Grey 035, Vallejo Flesh - 955 Flat Flesh, Gunze Acrylics - H304 Olive Drab, Tamiya Acrylics - XF-20 Medium Grey, Winsor & Newton Oil Paints, Rembrandt Pastel Chalks

✓ High level of detail; fast and easy build; big and impressive model.

✗ Missing right side wind sensor.

Available from

Academy kits are widely available from good model shops. Pocketbond Ltd, and Creative Models Ltd.

Rating ●●●●●●●●

The tracks were given many coats of black and brown oil washes before being given the same pastel treatment as the tank.





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AMPS 2012

The 2012 Armor Modeling and Preservation Society International Convention took place on the weekend of April 26-28, 2012 at the National Military History Center in Auburn, Indiana.

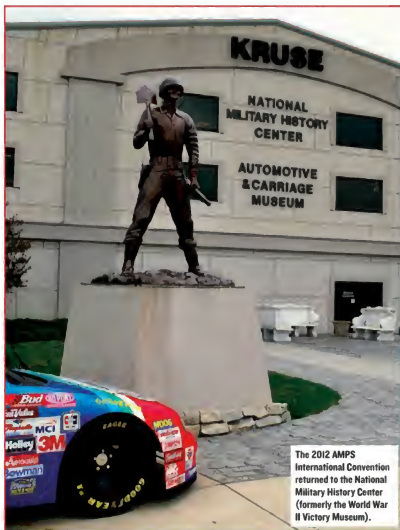
Although the location sounds new, the National Military History Center is the new name for the World War II Victory Museum, where the very successful 2008 and 2010 AMPS International Conventions were held. Like each of the previous shows held in Auburn, records were set for attendance - around 650 models

were entered for competition, with modellers from around the world attending. This year's theme was "Flak 'n Ack-Ack"; any military vehicle or land-based piece of ordnance designed for the anti-aircraft role was eligible for the theme award.

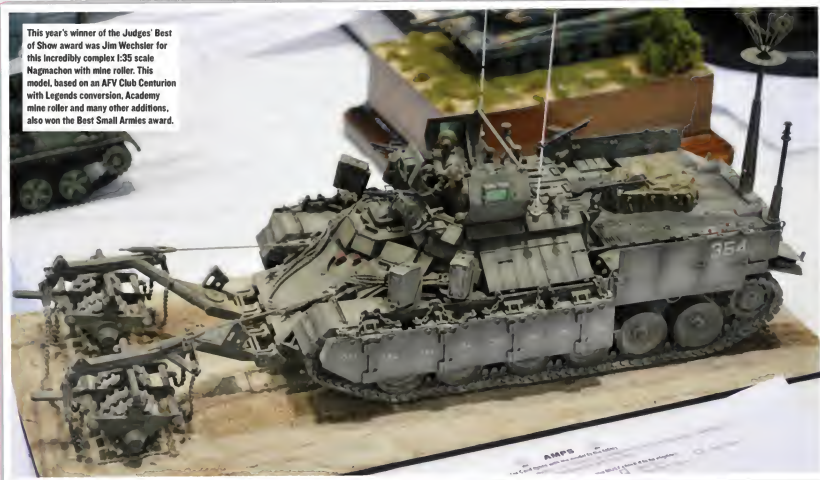
Part of the success of a show is its location. The National Military History Center provided

an excellent venue for a model show - a large, well-lit central open area for models and vendors, well-appointed rooms for seminars and SIG meetings, and several museums on site, including the 150+ vehicles in the NMHC's collection, the horse-drawn carriages, vintage automobiles, race cars and celebrity cars in the Kruse Automotive and Carriage

Museum, and even a collection of monster trucks in the International Monster Truck Hall of Fame. The Military Vehicle Preservation Association also administers the huge collection of drawings from the US Army's Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM) collection on site, and copies of these drawings were available for sale at the show.



The 2012 AMPS International Convention returned to the National Military History Center (formerly the World War II Victory Museum).





Woof! Woof! One of PMC Miniatures' new releases was this 1:35 scale bust of everybody's favourite World War II celluloid US Army tankier.

Both the quality and the quantity of models on the tables this year were extraordinarily high. This year's theme, antiaircraft vehicles and ordnance, was well-represented, with a wide variety of subjects on the table, ranging from various Flakpanzers and antiaircraft halftracks to missile vehicles such as a Patriot launcher and an SA-4 launcher, both in 1:35. In amongst the expected mass of Shermans, Tigers, Panthers, and Abrams on the table were some examples of the newest and latest kits, like the Tamiya M51 Sherman and BT-7 and the various Neubaufahrzeugs, as well as some older kits like the Renwal 1:32 75mm Skysweeper AA gun. A lot of stunning dioramas and vignettes were also on display, as well as a surprising number of "paper panzers" and other science fiction-related armour subjects.

The seminars offered at this year's show covered a wide variety of topics, including research, techniques and other topics. Neil Stokes talked about the later members of the KV family, particularly appropriate given some of the new releases coming from the Far East, while Jim Mesko gave a presentation on Pacific War armour. Bob Steinbrunn also discussed his amazing 1:6 M5A1 Stuart build, which was present at the show in all its immense glory. Among the A-list of presenters talking about modelling topics such as painting, weathering and diorama detailing were Mig Jimenez, Adam Wilder, Jari Hemilä and Dan Tisonick. Ken Schlotfeldt from Badger Air Brushes and Dave Manter also talked airbrushes.

The vending area this year was the biggest ever at an AMPS show, with over 100 tables devoted to vending. The show provides a great opportunity to see in the flesh a lot of the amazing products that cottage industries are making. Stalwarts like MIG Productions, Archer Fine Transfers, AK-Interactive, Tank Workshop, and Tiger Productions all had their full lines for sale. Chris Mrosko was back with a new company, PMC Miniatures, that has some superb figures and busts available, including two sets of 1:35 winter Waffen-SS Panther crews, as well as some figures off the ▶



Rick Lawler's powerful 1:35 diorama "The Burden of Sorrows" won both Best Diorama and People's Choice.



Bob Steinbrunn's amazing and huge 1:6 M5A1 Stuart (which started out as a 21st Century Toys model) won Best US Armour at the show. These are 1:35 Shermans surrounding it on the table!



The detail on Bob's 1:6 Stuart has to be seen to be believed. There's even a reproduction Technical Manual inside the turret!



AFV Club had a number of new and forthcoming 1:35 releases on display, including test sheets of parts from their Bussing-NAG L4500S, 40mm Befors, and individual track links for the LVT family.

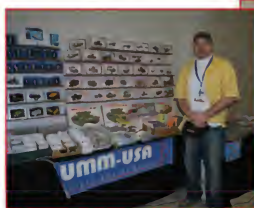
This year's winner of the David Harper Award for Best Marine Armor was David Manter for this 1:35 LVT-4.



I think there were more Neubaufahrzeug models on the table than there were real tanks built! Although most, including these two examples, were 1:35 models from Dragon, Trumpeter, or Amusing Hobby, there was also at least one 1:72 Dragon example on display.



David Vickers' "Guardian of the Bridge," which won Best Vignette, featured Trumpeter's big 1:16 scale MIG halftrack and some exquisite groundwork.



Jehn Vejtek, master modeller and one of the nicest people you will meet in the hobby, was vending the UMM line of tools as well as kits and accessories from SKP, Black Deg, and other companies.



Tony Zadro took away this year's theme award, for best antiaircraft vehicle, with this 1:35 Iraqi GAZ-66 transporter with SA-3 missile. Based on the Eastern Express kit, Tony scratchbuilt the missile equipment.

beaten path – a two-figure Mideast tank/APC crew and a 1:35 Cuban/Mideast GAZ-69 crew that includes a Fidel Castro head! In large scales, PMC Miniatures also has a magnificent 1:9 Waffen-SS MG-42 machine gunner sculpted by John Rosengrant. Commander Series Models had a number of new kits for sale, including their 1:35 Soviet T-10 heavy tank and US M6 Heavy Tank. AFV Club had test shots of some of their upcoming releases on display, including the 1:35 LVT individual link tracks, Bussing-NAG L4500s, and 40mm Bofors gun. Their newly-released 1:35 M42 Duster was one of the hot-selling kits at the show as well. Volume 2 of David Doyle's Visual History Volume on the Churchill covering special purpose variants, published by Ampersand, also made its debut at the show.

Even more so than at most model shows, there is a real sense of camaraderie at the AMPS convention, since the convention represents the only opportunity for many members of this primarily "virtual club" to meet in person. The way that the competition is run also sets AMPS shows apart from some other modelling organizations. The open judging system that AMPS has developed scores each model entered against a set of published criteria and medals are awarded relative to the entrant's skill level and the model's score, not against other models in the category. The intent of the judging system is to provide every modeller with feedback to help him or her understand why they received the scores they did and give pointers on how they could improve.

This year's AMPS convention was a smashing success – show chair John Charvat and his crew ran a tight ship and handled the huge number of entries in stride. Once again, the number of entries on the table broke AMPS records, with almost 650 models on the tables. In spite of this, the show will not be returning to Auburn for several years, as AMPS hits the road to offer modellers in other parts of the United States the opportunity to experience an AMPS International Convention. The 2013 show will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, next April (date to be determined), while the 2014 show is tentatively scheduled to be at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia and the 2015 show will be in Santa Clara, California. The theme for the 2013 show is "vehicles named after American Civil War Generals" – time to start building those Lees, Grants, Stuarts, Shermans and Sheridans! For more information on AMPS and upcoming shows, visit www.amps-armor.org ■



Tony Zadroz also won the Best German subject award with this resin 1:35 Skoda Radschlepper Ost. Rich Models will be releasing an injection-moulded kit of this vehicle in 2012.

The judging teams had to work overtime to look at the almost 650 models which were entered in this year's show. Every model entered is examined by a team of four judges, who compile written comments that are returned to the modeller.



Konrad Streiber's 1:48 Sherman Crab, based on a Tamiya Sherman and Tim Perry's Fighting 48 Sherman V Crab conversion, was one of a number of fine examples of 1:48 scale armour on display.



This year's theme, Flak 'n' Ack-Ack," brought out lots of AA vehicles, including Jim Carrowell's splendid 1:35 Finnish T-55 Marksman, which used an Accurate Armour conversion on a Tamiya T-55.



Anthony Guarderas brought a number of big truck models all the way from California. This Scammell Pioneer and AEC Matador combination are both from Accurate Armour kits.



One of the most impressive models on display was this 1:35 Patriot missile launcher. Aside from the HEMTT, most of this model was scratchbuilt!



There was a strong showing of armour-related science fiction subjects on the tables. One of them was Tom Gaston's scratchbuilt 1:35 post-apocalyptic vehicle, which used parts from a 1:48 FW-190!



What at first glance appears to be a 1:35 Hetzer is, in fact, a postwar Czechoslovakian Army ST4 tank destroyer – an interesting variation on the theme.

Adam Wilder's 1:35 Geschützwagen Tiger, built from the Trumpeter kit, serves as a large canvas for his masterful weathering techniques.



This impressive 1:16 Operation Barbarossa diorama, featuring the SOL Panzer 38(t) and some excellent figures, was built by Andy Gullen.



Some of the recent kit releases were well-represented on the tables, including this 1:72 Dragon Churchill Mark III.



LATE LIGHT FLAK

The 2cm Flak 38 (Flugabwehrkanone) was an improvement on the earlier 1920s / early 1930s designed Flak 30 and basically had a few parts replaced such as the bolt mechanism, accelerator and return spring to improve the rate of fire. Outwardly though, it was virtually identical to the earlier gun. The Flak 38 went into service in the early part of 1940 and was used everywhere and also fitted to a wide range of vehicles to give mobile AA support. A variety of sights were fitted to the gun starting with the Flakvisier 38, an electric computing sight with reflecting mirror, the Flakvisier 38A (a simplified system for ease of field repair) eventually leading to a simple ring type with cross hairs.

This is the latest boxing of Dragon's 1:35 scale Flak 38 and includes parts for the late production gun. Inside you have six sprues of grey styrene, a tiny decal sheet and brass etch parts in a separate tray that includes a pre-formed gun shield.

All parts are nicely moulded and detail is good. The new parts for the late production model are on a separate sprue and comprise the elevation hand wheels, gearbox and iron ring sight although the parts for an early gun are still present. You also have a choice of parts to fit to the 2cm gun itself to make the standard, late or Schwefelafette version. The flash suppressor is well done but as a personal preference I would replace it with a metal turned aftermarket barrel.

On the gun base (part A71) you may notice a mould seam running around it, however it is supposed to be there so leave it alone. I only mention this because I thought "Ooo a mould seam" and promptly removed it on the first Flak 38 I ever built... oops

You can set the gun to four angles and parts are provided to achieve this plus rather conveniently the angles are marked on the sprue as well. An empty shell basket is provided in etch brass but from experience I would replace it with fine nylon mesh as

Graham Tetley examines the new parts - and all the others - included in Dragon's latest 1:35 scale 2cm Flak 38.

It's a lot easier to work with.

The instructions are logical enough and seem straightforward plus the colour options are for three unidentified units in Italy, France and the Western Front from the 1944/45 period. Colour call outs are as usual from Testor's Model Master and Gunze Mr Hobby paint ranges.

Although it is billed as a late production kit, parts are still included for an early Flak 38 so this is quite a useful addition to the Dragon range. I am also hoping they produce the crew to go with it as featured on the box art.

My only gripe with the kit is that only a couple of ammo boxes and 2cm magazines are included and these things could use a ton of ammo so you will have to source these from elsewhere. Other than that I'm giving it a highly recommended and thumbs up. ★

Thanks to The Hobby Company Limited for the sample www.hobbyco.net



The large base. Don't sand off the raised seam around the edge!



Smaller parts are crisply moulded and beautifully detailed.



The trailer is moulded with the mudguards in place.



The gun barrel is a plastic moulding, including the flash suppressor.



Parts are included for the late and early version guns.



Photo-etched parts include a pre-formed gun shield.

MODEL KIT No 35412

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WWII German Semi-Track Truck

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- 4 versions decal sheet included



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1:35



Gary Edmundson tests out the hairspray technique to achieve a distressed whitewash finish on Dragon's challenging Sd.Kfz. 251/17 Ausf.D half-track.

HEIDERSHEID HAL

Released in 2005 by combining Dragon Models' Sd.Kfz. 251D with their 2cm Schwebelafette gun, DML created a kit of an extremely interesting subject that saw a fair bit of service in the latter stages of WWII.

Dragon's 1:35 Sd.Kfz. 251/17 Ausf.D w/2cm Schwebelafette kit no. 6292 is not what a modeller would call an "easy build". The base kit has received its share of criticism for dimensional and detail inaccuracies, and also some fit issues.

A wartime photo of this particular subject, knocked out in Luxembourg during the "Battle of the Bulge", was used as the basis for the box art, and also served as inspiration of the build since my good friend Steve Van Beveren and I were able to visit the spot in the small town of Heidersheid on a battlefield tour in Europe in 2006.

Because winter camouflage schemes can be a bit tricky to pull off effectively, I thought I'd try a new technique introduced to the hobby recently involving the use of hairspray to distress the

whitewash coat applied to vehicles at the time. This subject seemed to be a good excuse to experiment with this interesting method, and to build a model more or less "out of the box".

RUNNING GEAR AND LOWER HULL

The lower hull demands the use of large photo-etched metal pieces that I thought complicated the construction process and can't be seen on the completed model anyway, so they were left off. Also left off were the fuel tank and transmission, which are completely

hidden on the finished subject.

Since Modelkasten track links were to be used with the model, the drive sprockets were modified by removing 2/3 of the drive rollers so that the track runs would wrap around them effectively. Modelkasten provides enough links to do the two runs EXACTLY, save for two spares. The wheeled portion of the model was temporarily tacked together with crazy glue so that the track runs could be assembled and test fit on the model. The after-market links proved to look much



LF-TRACK

better than the kit provided offerings. Test fitting the tracks to the model seemed to produce a decent fit, which seemed to change after the painting process – more on that later!

INTERIOR

The model's interior was built primarily out of the box. Wiring was added to the radio using copper and lead wire, and slings for the two MP 40 "Schmeissers" were made from thin lead strip.

The entire area was primed with Tamiya XF-1 Flat Black acrylic, and

then given an XF-60 Dark Yellow coat allowing the black to remain as a pre-shade. The surface was then dampened with mineral spirit and a wash of raw umber and black oil paints was applied to "dirty up" the surface, and give some splotches and streaking to the interior of the vehicle.

All of the smaller details like seats, fire extinguishers and weapons were finished separately and attached later after the interior was painted and weathered. The relief detail was scraped from the dashboard and



The interior of the model received a coat of dark acrylic paint as a pre-shade for the final coat.



Tamiya's Dark Yellow XF-60 was airbrushed over all of the components, and details were picked out using Vallejo's acrylics.



The kit's radio had thin copper and solder wire added for power and communication cables.

the base coat was given a gloss surface using Future floor polish before the instrument decals were applied.

After all of the interior components and surfaces were painted and weathered, the top and bottom of the hull were glued together firmly. The top of the instrument panel had to be trimmed down to allow a proper fit of the upper hull. Clamps were used to hold the hull together as it was cemented sequentially front-to-back.

MAIN GUN

Dragon has engineered a very intricate model of the 2cm Schwebelafette gun. The delicate nature of the mount meant some careful handling to get the gun supports align correctly and to allow the barrel to elevate. Of the three gun shields provided in the kit, I chose the plastic one since it fit better and dealing with the photo-etched options proved extremely frustrating. The flared end of the barrel was thinned out with a sharp #11 X-acto blade. ▶



DML's 2 cm gun proved a delicate assembly indeed. After a futile attempt to use some of the photo-etched parts for it, the plastic options worked fine.

Rather than dispose of the extra paint used for priming and painting the interior, it was used up on the exterior and gun.



Tamiya's masking tape was used for covering the finished work on the interior before commencing on the exterior paintwork.

Aber's tool brackets were used on the kit's tools. The front armour plate was also shimmed up with scraps of styrene sheet to fix a gap due to fit issues with the hull.



EXTERIOR COMPONENTS AND DETAILS
One of the biggest difficulties of building this kit and having it look right was managing the stowage bin side panels. Parts A26 and A27 don't seem to want to mount properly on the side of the vehicle allowing the correct overhang of the upper hull's angled armour plate. To make this work, the parts were both filled down on their mounting surfaces to fit closer to the body of the vehicle. The upper edge was also trimmed down so the vertical face of the stowage bin area fit underneath the upper hull with the slight overhang apparent. I haven't constructed any of the other DML 251 halftrack kits, but I imagine this would have to be done to all of them to achieve the same effect.

Reference photos suggest the

OVE tools supplied with the kit are too small, so an axe and pick were taken from the spares box and mounted using Aber photo-etched brackets.

PAINTING PROCESS

Before trying this new (to me!) method of distressed & worn winter camouflage, I practised by first experimenting on an older kit. I had made Italeri's Horch Command Car a few years ago, and sacrificed it to science. The model was given a good soaking with a few blasts from a can of old hairspray. Probably too much in most areas, I thought. I then airbrushed Tamiya's white acrylic over most of the car, and let it dry thoroughly before adding a second coat on top of this.

After letting this dry for a day,

a #4 paintbrush, dampened with water, was applied to the white painted surface. The water soaked in through the white acrylic, and with a small amount of scrubbing with the bristles, the white paint started to flake off. By varying the amount of water and how long it sat on the model, I could achieve different effects of white paint removal as the hairspray dissolved underneath.

Moving back to the halftrack model and with the interior of the vehicle masked off, the exterior was airbrushed with Tamiya's XF-1 Flat Black with a hint of XF-64 Red Brown added. This served as a pre-shade to the XF-60 Dark Yellow coat, which was added next. The area behind the running gear was left much darker when applying the dark yellow. I chose

not to finish the model with a three-colour camouflage, since it would appear too distracting under the worn whitewash.

When the Dark Yellow acrylic was dry, a coat of Future floor acrylic was sprayed on to protect the finish. Decals were applied onto the glossy surface, and a further coat of Future was applied over this to protect the markings. I do add a touch of water to the Future floor polish to prevent a grainy appearance obtained when the liquid seems too thick.

When the last coat of Future gloss had dried, the hairspray layer was applied to the surface. Rather than use the can directly, the hairspray was directed into the valve-cap and transferred into



To test the winter camouflage method, an old Italeri model was coated with hair spray from the can. The resulting coat was applied too thickly in some areas, indicating an airbrush would be better.



The model was then sprayed over with some Tamiya acrylic white.



A dampened brush was then applied to the model to see how much water, soak time and scrubbing action produced the various stages of wear to the paint job.



After sealing the finish of the painted and decal hull with Future floor finish, acrylic hairspray was airbrushed over the entire exterior surfaces.



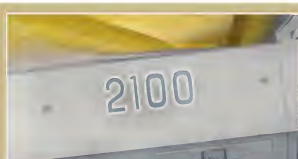
A small amount of Tamiya's XF-57 Buff was added to XF-2 White, and was airbrushed onto the model, followed by an airbrushing of XF-2 to highlight some of the upper surfaces.

the cup of my Paasche H1 airbrush with an eye-dropper. Application by airbrush improved the control over coverage and placement of the layer.

Tamiya's XF-2 Flat White had a touch of XF-57 Buff added to it to create an off-white or dirty white colour. This was airbrushed lightly over the model's upper hull, leaving minimal coverage over the vehicle numbers and factory stencil on the left hand side. A second dusting with a "whiter" shade was made to highlight some of the upper surfaces and features. The rear doors and gun shield were also done at the same time, but were left off the model to be added later during final assembly.

After the model had been set aside to dry for a day, a water-soaked brush was used to begin to help lift the paint randomly. Areas on the vehicle's side and hood where crew members might cause excessive wear received more attention. Wartime photos were referenced to get a feel for how much of the white paint to remove using the methods learned while experimenting previously on the old Horch model. After I was satisfied with the result, the model was set aside to dry. A coat of Future acrylic was airbrushed over this to again protect the surface.

Further weathering was applied



The decal areas of the model only received a token covering of the white paint.



As the damp brush was applied to the painted surface, the water soaked through the thin layer of white, and started to dissolve the hairspray layer beneath.



With gentle scrubbing, the white paint started to flake off.



After working several small sections at a time, the resulting wear on the exterior was made to appear randomly weathered.

to the model's lower hull with a light airbrushing of XF-57 Buff that had been diluted down heavily with thinner. The rear portion of the side panels and back of the vehicle received the most of this application.

Although a few areas of chipped paint were applied to detail the areas of wear around the engine hatches and stowage locker doors,

it was kept to a minimum and some marks even painted out because the effect did not look very convincing. The interior got a thinned wash of pastel chalks applied to the floor and seats which made the crew compartment look a bit more "lived in".

Pastel chalks were applied to the underside of the hull and mudguards creating a layer of

accumulated dirt typical of field use. After laying the powder in place, Tamiya's acrylic thinner was allowed to soak into the small mounds of pastel powders, adhering to the surface. A few rust streaks were placed down the hull sides using raw rubber oil paint, but these were kept to a minimum and washed down considerably with mineral spirits. ►



All components were worked on to achieve a consistently worn appearance, and then given a coat of protective finish afterwards using Future floor finish.



Ground chalk pastel was placed under the hull and soaked with Tamiya's acrylic thinner, adhering it to the model.

◀ The Modelkasten track runs were first sprayed with Floquil's Grimy Black, and then given a wash of pastel powder mixed with acrylic thinner. The metal portions of the track links were drybrushed with a mix of silver enamel and raw umber oil paint, and the rubber track pads were allowed to maintain their original Floquil finish, which appeared as a dirty dark grey colour.

The final phase of the project involved attaching the completed track runs to the model. The right hand run, with the same number of links, sat perfectly on the running gear. The left hand run was slightly too long, allowing a greater sag than required. Removing a link made the run a bit too tight, and because the idler was not adjustable, the resulting sit was not the greatest. Some surgery was performed on the drive sprocket, removing more of the rollers which helped the situation, but some of the links did require to be attached to the running gear with super glue to allow a more adequate sit.

CONCLUSION

It was interesting to try this hairspray technique to effectively weather a winter whitewash scheme. I imagine that many different mediums can be used to achieve the same result, but this one was pretty straightforward and worked with the acrylic paints I'm most familiar with using. ■

Modelspec

Dragon 1:35 Sd.Kfz. 251/17 Ausf.D w/2cm Schwerebelafette Kit No. 6292

Accessories Used:

Modelkasten: Sd.Kfz. 251 Tracks. Item No. K19
Aber Tool Brackets
Tamiya Masking Tape

Paints and Finishing Products:

Tamiya Acrylics: XF-1 Flat Black, XF-2 Flat White, XF-57 Buff, XF-60 Dark Yellow, XF-64 Red Brown.
Floquil Enamels: Grimy Black
Future Floor Polish
Hairspray
Pastel Chalks
Acrylic Thinners
Winsor & Newton Oil Paints: Lamp Black, Raw Umber

✓ Interesting subject, high level of detail inside and out.

✗ Dimensional and detail inaccuracies, some fit issues.

Available from

Dragon kits are distributed in the UK by The Hobby Company Limited www.hobbyco.net

Rating ●●●●●●●●



A small amount of pastel chalk was dusted around the vehicle's interior, dirtying up the floor.

"Before trying this new (to me!) method of distressed and worn winter camouflage, I practised by first experimenting on an older kit..."

Pastel chalk mixed with acrylic thinner was also dappled onto the running gear to suggest muddy buildup from the wet roads encountered in the Ardennes offensive.



Metal parts including the MG 42 were highlighted with silver enamel toned down with raw umber oil paint.

A small amount of chipped paint was simulated using a 000 paintbrush and Floquil's Grimy Black lacquer.



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- Steve A. Evans corrects and updates the Trumpeter 1:48 Su-15
- Michael Moores builds the new Su-33 in 1:72 from Hasegawa
- F-102 Delta Dagger by Richard J. Caruana and much more...



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- The Bundeswehr's Boxer MRAV by Hobbyboss
- Revell's 1:48 SH-60B Seahawk hovering over water!
- Italeri's 1:48 Hurricane Mk.I full-build
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Bronco has recently released the first 1:35 scale plastic kit of the YW-531C. Jose Brito completes this new model in a Gulf War desert finish.

KUWAIT CITY

4 AUGUST 1990

Iraq launched the invasion of Kuwait by bombing Kuwait City, the Kuwaiti capital, on 2 August 1990. Kuwait did not have its forces on alert, and was caught unaware. Iraqi Commandos infiltrated the Kuwaiti border first to prepare for the major units, which began the attack at the stroke of midnight. The Iraqi attack had two prongs, with the primary attack force driving south straight for Kuwait City down the main highway, and a supporting attack entering Kuwait farther west, but then turning and driving due east, cutting off the capital city from the southern half of the country. The Commander of a Kuwaiti armoured battalion, 35th Armoured Brigade, deployed against the Iraqi attack and was able to conduct a robust defence (The Battle of the Bridges), near Al Jahra, west of Kuwait City.

After two days of intense combat, most of the Kuwaiti

Armed Forces were either overrun by the Iraqi Republican Guard, or had escaped to neighbouring Saudi Arabia. The Emir and key ministers were able to get out and head south along the highway for refuge in Saudi Arabia. Iraqi ground forces consolidated their control on Kuwait City, then headed south and redeployed along the border of Saudi Arabia.

After the decisive Iraqi victory, Kuwait City was overrun by assaults and looting.

Saddam Hussein initially installed a puppet regime known as the "Provisional Government of Free Kuwait" before installing his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid as the governor of Kuwait on August 8.

THE YW-531C FROM BRONCO

The new 1:35 scale YW-531C kit from Bronco is a very fine model and can be turned into a great replica. The kit is presented in a

medium size box with a beautiful art-box depicting an Iraqi vehicle. Once the box opened, we are presented with several sprues, individual plastic track links, a small photo-etched fret, clear parts, very well printed decals and a short length of string to represent the steel cables. The instructions are very clear and concise.

If I am not wrong, the YW-531C from Bronco is the only 1:35 plastic kit of this vehicle. Bronco really did a great job and in their catalogue there are several versions about this vehicle.

CONSTRUCTION

The Bronco kit is a great replica; but even so we can always find some space for extra work. Small details can really bring a model to life and I decided to spend some time with them.

Some of the extra details are really small so we must pay

attention to them. In situations like this, the best approach is glue them in the capillary mode. For this, I use Deluxe Materials' Plastic Magic Glue. For the best results I use their Pin Magic applicator. Pin Magic applicator will allow an ultra control, because the Plastic Magic Glue is ultra thin. Being so thin, it is ideal to work as capillary.

The kit provides a small photo-etched sheet. Bronco did a great job here and the sheet covers the entire model. The kit plastic detail is very nice but some parts are impossible (at this moment and with the current technology) to reproduce in this medium. This is why we need the photo-etch parts.

The parts must be carefully cut with the help of a brand new blade. The cut must be made in the marked spots. Once the part cut from the sheet, we must see if it is completely flat and if is necessary to sand some pin marks. ►



Bronco's 1:35 scale YW-531C is a very nice model straight from the box.



Individual track links are included.



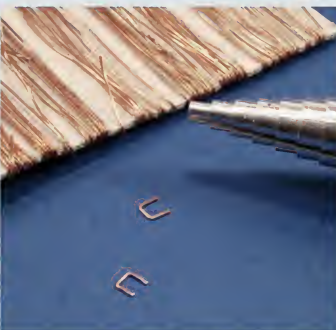
Bronco's photo-etched fret supplies many small detail parts for the vehicle.



Although the kit detail is good, additional work was added to some of the smaller parts. Here, the hinges for one of the hatches is being drilled out.



The hatch is now workable thanks to a short length of .025" Evergreen plastic rod.



Authentic tie-down and hand holds were bent from short lengths of copper wire.



To glue everything in place, several solutions from Odeux Materials were used.



Heat from a cigarette lighter was used to soften some of the scratch-built plastic details, allowing them to be bent to shape.



Photo-etched parts and some small scratch built plastic details added to the kit hull.



Specific tools like the workstations from Small Shop Tools are very useful to work with photo-etch.



Basic construction is complete.



The tracks have now been added to the vehicle. Note that some of the parts, such as the large rear hatch, are only test-fitted at this stage.



Metal tow cables add an air of authenticity to the project.

Specific tools like the workstations from Small Shop Tools are very useful to work with photo-etched parts. We can achieve the same results with some pliers, but if you want the best results and if you are regular modeller, then this is a great investment. Tools like this allow bending into a wide variety of shapes and the results are great.

To glue everything in place, several solutions from Deluxe Materials were used. For the capillary work I, usually apply, the Rocket Hot solution. For a more conventional approach, I use the Rocket Rapid. The first solution, being thinner, allows a better flow. The second solution is thicker and better to hold the small parts in place for longer.

The model fully assembled and ready for the painting process. Note how the plastic individual track links improve the model's final look. Besides, they look ultra accurate and with a natural sag.

The photo-etched fret really improves the model.



The completed model received a coat of Vallejo Grey Surface Primer before the paint job proper commences.



The first colour being airbrushed is Vallejo Model Air 71115 1st Shadow.



All the products from the Vallejo Zenith Transformation Set were airbrushed in well-thinned layers in order to keep the surface detail.



For the decals and in the desired spot we must apply some Vallejo Decal Fix 73213. This is a setting solution and will increase the decal setting in the surface.



The decals are carefully cut from the sheet and dipped in water before being applied to the model.



Weathering started by applying thousands of small scratches. The process started with the help of a small sponge and ended with help of a very fine brand new brush.



The entire model received a well-thinned wash in several oil colours from the MIG Productions 502 Abteilung range.



Several pin washes were applied in MIG Productions Light Rust Effects, Standard Rust Effects and Dark Wash.



MIG Productions Brown for Desert Yellow filters was also applied in order to get a wide colour variation.



Vallejo pigment colours were applied in order to get the dusty look. In this case they were applied in the "dry method".

PAINTING

Being a multi-media model, a good primer solution is necessary and very important. So, the entire model was airbrushed in Vallejo Surface Primer 74601 Grey Primer. Vallejo primers dry very fast and turn the surface very smooth, ideal for airbrushing. They must be airbrushed in several layers in order to keep the surface detail.

For the painting process I used the brand new Vallejo Desert War Zenith Transformation Set, which is a professional airbrush set designed by...mel The colours presented in the set are all-new and will allow the modellers to finish their desert painted models in a well balanced light and shadow finish.

The first colour being airbrushed is the Vallejo Model Air 71115 1st Shadow. This colour must be applied in the lower and most recessed parts.

The second colour being airbrushed is the Vallejo Model Air 71116 2nd Shadow. This time airbrushed over the entire model, except in the parts already painted in the Vallejo Model Air 71115 1st Shadow.

The third colour being airbrushed is the Vallejo Model Air 71117 Base. This colour must be airbrushed over the biggest flat and top parts.

Now, for the lights. The first one being applied is the Vallejo Model Air 71118 1st Light. This colour must be applied over the top of the model.

The second light was applied in Vallejo Model Air 71119 2nd Light. This colour must be applied over the most raised parts on top of the model.

The final colour being applied is the Vallejo Model Air 71120 Bright. This must be applied only over the most raised and prominent top parts.

The final step of the Zenith

Transformation process is seal all the paint job. For that, the entire model was airbrushed in Vallejo Model Air 70522 Satin Varnish.

All the products, from the Vallejo Zenith Transformation Set, must be airbrushed in well-thinned layers in order to keep the surface detail. In the end, we can achieve a very nice and accurate light / shadow look over the entire model.

For the decals and in the desired spot we must apply some Vallejo Decal Fix 73213. This is a setting solution and will increase the decal setting in the surface.

Use a brand new scalpel blade and a steel ruler to cut the decal sheet. The decals must be cut very close to the drawing. Watch your fingers!

Place the decals in water and wait a few seconds. Some brands of decals need more time than others. In this case, the ones from Bronco only need about 15 seconds to detach from the back paper.

Place the decal in the desired

The three figures are from MIG Productions catalogue.



The figures were painted using Vallejo Model Colour for the clothes and accessories and oils for the flesh areas.



For the dusty look, the figures received several well-diluted layers of MIG Productions 502 Abtrellung Abt035 Buff, thinned with their Odourless Turpentine.





The Coca-Cola vending machine is from MIG Productions (Modern City Set #2).



It was previously primed in Vallejo Surface Primer 74601 Grey Primer and then airbrushed in Vallejo Model Air 71003 Scarlet Red.



Once completely dry, several washes were applied in MIG Productions 502 Abteiling Oil colours thinned in Odourless Turpentine from the same range.

spot; remove the water excess with the help of a cotton bud and to finish the process, all we need to do is apply a coat of Vallejo 73212 Decal Medium. This product will soften the decal and increase the setting. In fact this product will almost destroy the decal. The decal will turn into a bad look, but no worries, once Vallejo Decal Medium is well dry; the decal will look great and will look like painted over the surface.

To finish the job, the entire model was airbrushed in Vallejo Model Air Matt Varnish. The varnish will protect and seal the decal.

WEATHERING AND FINISHING

Time for the weathering and finishing. By the time Iraq invaded Kuwait, the YW-531Cs were already veterans from the Iraq / Iran war, so I wanted to represent a battle weary vehicle. The weathering started by applying thousands of small scratches. The process

started with the help of a small sponge and ended with help of a very fine brand new brush. Several colours were used in order to achieve a more realistic look.

The entire model received a well-thinned wash in several oil colours from the MIG Productions 502 Abteiling range. The oils were thinned in odourless turpentine from the same company. We really must use several colours in order to achieve a more chromatic and accurate finish.

Several pin washes were applied in MIG Productions Light Rust Effects, Standard Rust Effects and Dark Wash. They must be applied with the help of a fine brush and around the recessed areas and details.

Several filters were also applied in order to get a wide colour variation. In this case MIG Productions brown for desert yellow.

MIG Productions Oil and Grease Stain Mixture were also applied around recessed and usually lubricated parts. For a better finish these wash solutions can be thinned with MIG Productions Thinner for Washes.

With all the wash work well dry,

several Vallejo pigment colours were applied in order to get the dusty look, in this case they were applied in the "dry method". The "dry method" means that they are applied directly from the jar and then they will be fixed in place.

The pigments were fixed in place with Winsor & Newton Artists' White Spirit. All we have to do is apply, by brush, several drops over the pigments and let to dry without touching it. During this process the model will turn very dark and it seems that the pigments disappear, but once the White Spirit evaporates the pigments will appear again and they will look very natural and realistic.

For the splashes, Vallejo Pigments were mixed with Vallejo Glaze Medium and brushed over the desired spots. The finish looks very natural and can add spots of interest to the model.

The main gun was painted in Vallejo acrylics from the Model Colour range and then the metal finish was achieved with the help of a soft graphite pencil. All we have to do is pass the pencil several times over the desired spots. The finish is very accurate and realistic.

BASE AND DIORAMA

Some of MIG Productions' items were used in the base making. Wood base, sandpaper, white glue and the usual tools were also employed.

White glue was applied over the wood base. Then a sheet of sandpaper will be placed over an invisible diagonal line for a more dynamic look and a more interesting composition.

The sidewalk was made in plastic card and the pattern was achieved with the help of a scriber tool. Note the invisible diagonal placement.

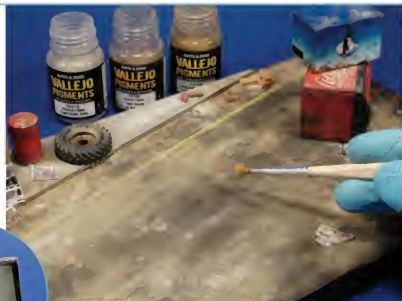
Once in place and the pattern finished, the sidewalk was airbrushed in Vallejo Surface Primer 74601 Grey Primer.

The Coca-Cola vending machine from MIG Productions (Modern City Set #2) is a lovely resin piece. It was previously primed in Vallejo Surface Primer 74601 Grey Primer and then airbrushed in Vallejo Model Air 71003 Scarlet Red. Once well dry, it was masked in Tristar masking tape.

All the black parts were airbrushed in Vallejo Model Air 71057 Black and once dry, the masking tape was removed. MIG

The freezer, from the same set as Coca-Cola vending machine, received the same treatment.

The penguin decal is homemade and adds a special touch of realism.



The sidewalk received several washes in MIG Productions oils and wash solutions and several small details were picked in oils from the same company.



The finished vehicle, ready to be added to the scene.

Productions provides several stickers in their Modern City Set #2. Some of them are for the Coca-Cola vending machine. It would be better if they were decals, but the stickers also work fine.

The Coca-Cola vending machine, even in 1:35 is a massive item. At this point the stickers are still obvious but they will be more subtle in the end.

The Coca-Cola vending machine received thousands of small scratches. The process started with the help of a small sponge and ended with help of a very fine brand new brush. Several colours were used in order to achieve a more realistic look. Once well dry, several washes were applied in MIG Productions 502 Abteilung Oil colours thinned in Odourless Turpentine from the same range.

The freezer, from the same set as Coca-Cola vending machine, received the same treatment. The penguin decal is homemade and adds a special touch of realism.

The sidewalk received several washes in MIG Productions oils and

wash solutions and several small details were picked in oils from the same company.

The main elements were placed over an invisible diagonal line and turn the scene more dynamic and visually interesting. Also, note that there are no dead spots and everything serves to tell a story and add a time and space frame to the scene.

Pigments from Vallejo range were applied over the base using the "dry method". The "dry method" means that they are applied directly from the jar and then they will be fixed in place.

The pigments were fixed in place with Winsor & Newton Artists' White Spirit.

FIGURES

All the figures are from MIG Productions catalogue and they are just lovely. The detail is very nice and the casting flawless. They are in resin and their construction very straightforward.

The figures were painted in my usual fashion. Vallejo Model Colour

for the clothes and accessories and oils for the flesh areas.

For the dusty look, the figures received several well-diluted layers of MIG Productions 502 Abteilung Abt035 Buff, well thinned with their Odourless Turpentine.

CONCLUSION

This was a very enjoyable project. The Bronco kit is great and once finished it looks very nice. It was also a perfect project to test my first Zenith Transformation Airbrush Set. A set that I made for Vallejo Acrylics from Spain is commercially available right now. ■

Modelspec

Bronco 1:35 scale TW-520C

Kit No. 35082

Items Used

- 1:35 MIG Productions, Modern Arab Tankers Set (35-170)
- 1:35 MIG Productions, Instructing Iraqi Commander (35-179)
- 1:35 MIG Productions, Modern City Lamp (35-105)
- 1:35 MIG Productions, Modern City Set #2 (35-101)
- 1:35 MIG Productions, Striped Metal Drums (35-109)

Materials and Paints Used

Hood glue, Deluxe Materials glue solutions, Heat isolation foam, Wood base, Injected plastic, Resin parts, Plastic card, Metal parts.
Vallejo primers, acrylics, washes, pigments, pastes and thinners.
MIG Productions oils, washes, filters and thinners.
Winsor & Newton oil colours and thinners.
Graphite soft pencil, Aquaplast, Robbiabac, Fine sand, Plus Model Lead Wire.

References used

Several internet sites and forums

- Great vehicle from Bronco and great figures and urban stuff from MIG productions.
- Nothing worth mentioning.

Available from

Bronco kits are available online from Hannants
www.hannants.co.uk

Rating ●●●●●●●●



The main elements were placed over an invisible diagonal line and turn the scene more dynamic and visually interesting.

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Please call us now for full details of prices, availability and range; UK (+44) 01525 222573

SS27024 - M41 Walker Bulldog Walk Around (Soft Cover) SS67024 - M41 Walker Bulldog Walk Around (Hard Cover)



The standard U.S. light tank during the early years of the Cold War, the M41 Bulldog was developed as a more powerful successor to the M24 Chaffee. Named for General Walton Walker who died in a Jeep accident in Korea, the Walker Bulldog was maneuverable and well armed. It was, however, rushed to the battlefield to counter North Korea's Soviet built T-34s before all its own kinks had been worked out. Accordingly a number of Bulldog variants were developed over the years in an effort to overcome initial deficiencies. The U.S. Army began phasing out the Bulldog at the end of the 1960s, but the rugged vehicle has served more than 20 other countries and continues to operate in several armies around the world to this day. The detailed photographs that pack this volume offer readers a detailed look at all the facets of the M41, inside and out. In addition to comprehensive images of the outside of the Bulldog, five pages cover the engine compartment alone, while images of the interior of vehicle and turret fill 25 pages. Illustrated with 250 photographs plus color profiles and numerous detailed line drawings; 80 pages.

SS27026 - M551 Sheridan Walk Around (Soft cover) SS67026 - M551 Sheridan Walk Around (Hard cover)



First deployed in combat in Vietnam, the M551 Sheridan is the first U.S. tank to be fully amphibious and also airborne capable. Though maintenance problems and issues with the gun-launcher system caused the M551 to be withdrawn from most active Army units in the late 1970s, it continued to serve the 82nd Airborne Division as the only armored vehicle in the Army's inventory that could be air dropped. With the 82nd, the Sheridan took part in the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989 and in the war against Iraq in 1990-1991. The last M551s were withdrawn from U.S. service in 2003. Based on photographic studies of various M551s, volume offers readers the first-ever up close look at the Sheridan. Coverage of the basic M551 begins with the suspension and works its way around the exterior of the tank, into the engine compartment and finishes with a detailed look at the vehicle's interior. Photos of the sub-variants of the M551 Sheridan, such as the "Product Improvement Program," A1, and VISMDOs round out this profile of the versatile light tank. Illustrated by more than 240 photographs plus eight detailed line drawings; 80 pages.

SS27025 - M26 Dragon Wagon Walk Around (Soft Cover) SS67025 - M26 Dragon Wagon Walk Around (Hard Cover)



Designed by the Knuckey Truck Company with series production by the Pacific Car and Foundry Company, the "40-ton Tank Transporter Truck Trailer M25" - dubbed the "Dragon Wagon" by enthusiasts - was the largest wheeled vehicle fielded by the U.S. Army during World War II. The M25 consisted of the M26 tractor and M15 trailer. Designed to recover disabled tanks and other heavy armored vehicles from forward areas, the M26 featured a large and heavily armored cab to protect the crew. Field use, however, indicated that typically this vehicle was not used in recovery operations during the heat of battle, so the later-production M26A1 eschewed the armored cab in favor of reduced weight and increased reliability. As U.S. tanks evolved and became larger and heavier, an upgraded version of the trailer, the M15A1, was introduced to accommodate them. During the 1950s the M15A1 was further modified to the M15A2 standard, which featured a 24-volt lighting system. As such, these veteran trailers saw service through the Vietnam War and into the 1970s. The M26 and M26A1 remained in the U.S. Army inventory well beyond the end of WWII - even being employed by NASA to move the Saturn V rockets that launched man to the moon in the 1960s. This Walk Around examines the armored and soft-skin versions of this massive vehicle, and its trailers, through hundreds of color photos and some of the finest restored examples in existence. The reader is visually taken over, under, and through these vehicles from front bumper to loading ramp. Illustrated with over 230 photographs. 80 pages.

SS2048 - WWII US SHERMAN IN ACTION



The iconic American tank of World War II, the M4 Sherman was known for its simple, reliable, and flexible design. Ten different companies contributed to the total output of 50,000 units produced in a myriad of variations. Even after it went into serial production in 1942 the Sherman was subject to almost constant change and modification, based on lessons learned and needs perceived on the battlefield. The full story of the Sherman's exploits would fill several volumes, so this book focuses on the variants and sub-variants of the Shermans used by U.S. forces during WWII. The Shermans that rolled off the assembly lines in 1945 bore little resemblance to the M4s produced in 1942, and this volume chronicles each major model of the Sherman everywhere the American soldier fought. Augmenting the nearly 200 period photos, many of them in rare original color, are a host of exquisitely rendered line drawings illustrating the subtle variations in hull, turret, and weapons used on these famed armored fighting vehicles. Includes color profiles; 80 pages.

SS27023 - Ft-17 / M1917 WWI Tanks Walk Around (Soft Cover) SS67023 - Ft-17 / M1917 WWI Tanks Walk Around (Hard Cover)



Introduced in 1917, the Renault FT-17 and its American-built copy, the M1917, revolutionized tank design. The vehicle's rotating turret, rear-engine, driver-forward design are characteristics of the most advanced tanks even today. This volume presents a careful study of the details and variations of this innovative vehicle, inside and out. Two-hundred thirty-seven photographs reveal the intimacies of no fewer than 14 of the finest surviving examples of these machines, preserved on three different continents. Examples feature a variety of paint schemes and camouflage patterns, the rounded and flat-plate castings for the rear of the vehicle and the tail skid and turret variations between the Renault FT-17 and U.S.-made M1917. The driver's compartment in the interior of the tank is revealed, and close ups record the configuration of the engine. Nine detailed line drawings supplement the photos and comprehensive captions. 80 pages.

Shown here is a selection of some of the most popular titles, many more available

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August 4th-5th



PRESENT ARMS 2012
 The Military & Flying Machines team are delighted to announce the impressive Essex Miniature

Armoured Fighting Vehicle Association (MAFVA) annual model show "Present Arms" will this year take place during the Military & Flying Machines show at Damyns Hall on 4th & 5th August 2012.
 Tickets are available on ticketmaster.co.uk or visit www.militaryandflyingmachines.org.uk.

August 19th

LETCROWTH MODEL SHOWCASE 2012
 Letcworth Scale model club is proud to announce MODEL SHOWCASE on Sunday 19th August 2012
 Our new venue is The Broadway Hotel Ballroom, Letcworth, SG6 3NZ
 (Next door to Morrisons Supermarket) less than a minute from Letcworth station. Ample parking at the venue and at the

town centre carpark less than 3-4 mins away
 Doors Open 10.00.
 Trade stands, visiting clubs and demos, 20 class competitions. Wargames demos/participation games. And if you get peckish there is everything from a sandwich to a 4 course meal, and a bar for the non drivers
 For Further info please contact Bob Parker 01480 891710 or email robenparker@sky.com, or Frank Henson. 01462674020

August 25th



The Edmonton International AFV Model Show, Open House & Military Vehicle Display.
 The annual EIAFVMS will be held on August, 25th, 2012.

The show will be held at HMCS Nonsuch, 117 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5G-3E8, Canada.
 Will have Military Artists: Ron Volstad and Robert Bailey, & vendors present.
 Registration Sat : 09:00 til 12:00, show goes to 6pm.
 ArmyMotors will be present to display historical Military

Vehicles, with re enactors as well. Present day Military vehicles and open house.
 Contact for more info:
ANTHONY SEWARDS:
teutonicknights@shaw.ca
 Jon Baniak: jonbaniak@shaw.ca
 Rod Dumouchel: krdumouc@telus.net
 Website: www.aafvms.ca
 Facebook: Edmonton International AFV Show
 Mailing Address: EIAFVMS - Po Box 71071, Edmonton, Alberta, T5E-6J8 CANADA

September 1st

Cornwall Scale Modellers & IPMS Show
 The Cornwall Scale Modellers & IPMS Show will be held on 1st September 2012 at St Johns Hall, Alverton Road, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2QR Adults £1.50 Children Free. Club & Trader stands, competitions, Demonstration of resin moulds by DMC, Stalwart 6x6, Amphibian. Refreshments.
 Contact by E-mail info@cornishscalemodellers.co.uk

September 8th-9th
 QMHE 2012, BRISBANE AUSTRALIA
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Queensland Model Hobbies Expo and Queensland Scale Modelling Championships, will be held at the Brisbane Table Tennis Association Stadium, Green Terrace, Windsor (Downey Park), Brisbane, Queensland 4030, Australia from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Saturday 08 September and 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Sunday 09 September 2012.
 Visit www.qmhe.com or contact the Secretary: secretary@qmhe.com for more information.

October 6th

Abingdon IPMS Model Show. Larkmead school, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1BB
 Open from 10.00-16.00
 Adult £3, con/OAP £2
 There will be approximately 20 traders, 30 clubs stands, competition and Burger van. For further information or booking details contact Simon Fisher email: simonfisher2008@btinternet.com or 07769 345271

October 13th

North Surrey Military Modelling Group's Annual Show will be held on Saturday 13th October 2012 from 10am- 4pm at: The Thomas Wall Centre, 52 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 4DP



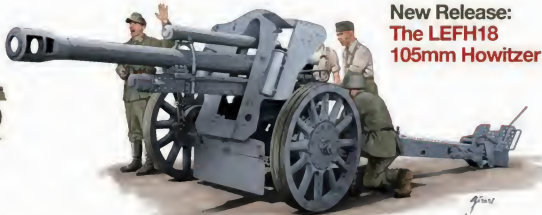
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Small Scale A round-up of the latest news and releases in 1:72 and 1:76



DRAGON ARMOR PRO SERIES

1:72 SCALE CHURCHILL MK.III • KIT NO. 7396

Dragon's new offering in the Armor Pro range, the British Churchill Mk. III, appears to be another winner, long awaited by Allied armour fans. The kit comprises upper and lower hulls, two large sprues, one small sprue, all bagged separately, and the usual Dragon inlay card containing the D5 tracks and a small decal sheet. The instruction sheet is the line drawing type, showing construction in 5 stages, and a painting and marking diagram showing one British Tunisian scheme 1943, and two Canadian schemes from the ill-fated Dieppe raid 1942.

The upper and lower hull pieces are 'slide moulded' and show excellent detail on all surfaces, but the driver's and radio operator's hatches are moulded shut. Sprue A contains the drive sprockets and idler wheels together with many of the hull and turret details, all of which are very finely detailed, especially the Besa MG's and small turret details.

Sprue B contains the rest of the running gear and the side sponsons. These are again very well moulded but the road wheels suffer from many large sprue attachment points that will be challenging to remove cleanly without damaging the wheels. The side sponsons, although nicely detailed have the tow cables moulded on, which is a pity as the will be hard to remove for replacement with better aftermarket examples.

Sprue D (there is no Sprue C) contains the turret which looks excellent, and the rear engine deck which has the pioneer tools moulded on which again is a pity (but they are well moulded and will probably look very good when painted). The turret has both hatches with separate lids, enabling crew figures to be added easily, and the main gun barrel has a hollow bore.

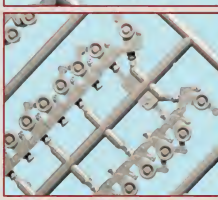
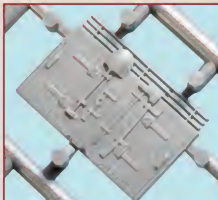
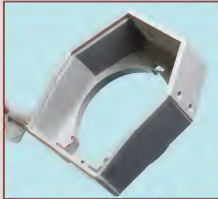
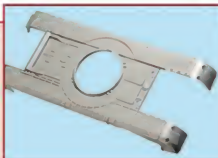
The tracks are moulded in the now standard D5 styrene and are superbly detailed, with the instruction sheet showing the correct length so that they can be stretched or shortened to suit.

The small decal sheet is well printed, in register, with all the markings for the vehicles shown, and although there is no etched brass detail fret with this kit, it will still build into a fine display model of an iconic Allied tank.

Highly Recommended.

Thanks to The Hobby Company Limited for the sample www.hobbyco.net

Steve Shrimpton



DRAGON ARMOR PRO SERIES

1:72 SCALE SD.KFZ. 232 SCHWERER

PANZERSPÄHWAGEN (FU)

KIT NO. 7429

Dragon continues its hectic release schedule of new kits for 'braille scale' modellers with some interesting and long awaited vehicles. In the past, some Dragon kits have been a bit of a mixed bag, but not so with this little gem. The kit comes in the standard, sturdy, lid and tray cardboard box, with each of the three sprues and upper and lower hulls in separate plastic bags, together with a decal sheet in a ziplock bag, and a sheet of instructions.

The moulding is extremely fine and detailed with many small and delicate parts, especially in the construction of the chassis and suspension. Great care will need to be taken removing such items as the steering arms from the sprue. The wheels are well detailed and have a convincing tread pattern and bolt detail.

The hull and turret are very well moulded with crisp detailing on all the surfaces due to Dragon's slide-moulding technology, the turret hatch being separate to allow it to be modelled open or closed. The fenders are also well detailed but have the slight disadvantage of the fire extinguishers and shovel moulded on, but these could easily be removed and replaced with separate items from the spares box.

The most iconic feature of this vehicle, the large frame aerial, is also very finely moulded but again great care will be needed to separate it from the sprue as it is a delicate item with many attachment points.

The only negative aspects of the kit are the moulded on tow rope on the spaced armour and the jerry cans, both of which can easily be replaced with aftermarket products and will greatly enhance an extremely well produced kit.

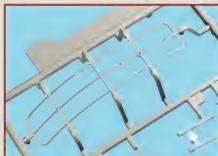
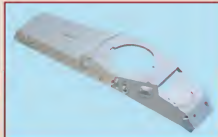
The instruction sheet is the usual well produced line drawing type used by Dragon with four painting and marking options shown, two in Panzergrau, one in plain Dunkelgelb and one in Dunkelgelb and Olivgrün camouflage. One word of warning - although well produced, the instruction sheets do sometimes contain errors as in this case in stage 2 where the drive units are shown as optional!

The decal sheet is up to the usual Dragon standard, and contains all the national marking plus tiny individual numbers to make up the number plates of specific vehicles if required. All in all this kit should build into a fine display model of well-documented and iconic vehicle.

Highly Recommended!

Thanks to The Hobby Company Limited for the sample www.hobbyco.net

Steve Shrimpton



DRAGON ARMOR PRO SERIES **1:72 SCALE IJN TYPE 2 (KA-MI) AMPHIBIOUS TANK** **KIT NO. 7435**

Dragon is continuing their series of Japanese light tanks in the Armor Pro range. These have been very well received as excellent kits and this little gem is no exception. On opening the standard Dragon box it is surprising to see how little there is inside, but what is there is excellent.

The kit is made up from the upper and lower hulls, one sprue of wheels and detail parts, the turret and the usual Dragon Inlay card containing the DS tracks, a tiny etched brass fret and the decal sheet.

The hull pieces make the most of the 'slide-moulding' technology, showing much fine details on hatches, rivets and panel lines etc. The attachment points for the flotation units are particularly good, as are the towing shackles and engine grill.

The road wheels are moulded on the suspension units as inner and outer pairs and are finely detailed on both sides, as are the drive sprockets and idler wheels. The rest of the hull details are equally good and some care will be needed in assembly as many parts are very small and delicate.

For me, the tiny turret is the highlight of the kit with superb detailing including opening hatches, complete rivet details, slide-moulded main gun with hollow muzzle, excellent co-axial MG, radio aerial mounts, etc.

The tracks are the now-standard DS type and although tiny, are very well detailed. (The instruction sheet now has advice on stretching or shortening the tracks to fit which seems an excellent idea as there has in the past been complaints about non fitting tracks.)

The last piece of the kit is the single etched brass grill for the exhaust silencer, which should finish the model off nicely.

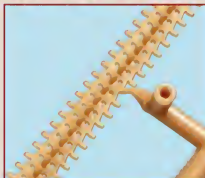
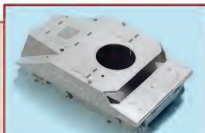
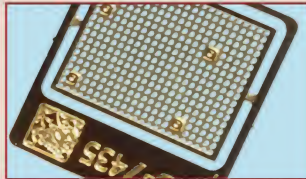
The only negative aspect of the kit is the absence of the fore and aft flotation pods which enabled the tank to be truly amphibious. Although these were not used extensively in practice, I feel Dragon could have included them, particularly as the kit is so small as it stands.

As these tanks came under the control of the Japanese navy, the colour scheme was just plain navy grey with just the Japanese flag decal for the turret adding a splash of colour. The small decal sheet comprises of these flags and some 3 digit white numbers for the second paint scheme illustrated. Although this is not a 'pretty' vehicle, it will build into a fine model with careful painting and weathering and is highly recommended!

Highly Recommended.

Thanks to The Hobby Company Limited for the sample
www.hobbyco.net

Steve Shrimpton





WORKBENCH MINIATURES

1:35 SCALE

MODERN IMAGE SKIP SET

Many modellers will know Spencer Pollard as long-time Editor of Military In Scale magazine, author, and as a talented armour and aircraft modeller.

This multimedia Renaissance man has now added another string to his bow with the launch of a new range of resin accessories called Workbench Miniatures.

The first Workbench Miniatures release is a 1:35 scale modern rubbish skip set. Two skips of different sizes will be found inside the stout and well-packed cardboard box. They are both perfectly cast in grey resin. The smaller skip is cast entirely in one piece, while the larger item has a separate drop gate, lifting lugs and triangular reinforcements.

The eleven resin parts are beautifully cast. The only clean-up required will be the removal of three small raised casting stems on the bottom of each skip. The smaller parts are cast onto fine attachment points – a sharp hobby blade is all that will be required here.

Although construction is almost self-explanatory, a double-sided A4 sheet of colour-illustrated instructions is included. A separate disk is also supplied, which includes a PDF version of the instructions plus a folder of images of the completed skips loaded up with various bits of rubbish. These photos offer some attractive inspiration for modellers.

The package is rounded out with a set of self-adhesive "Miracle Masks". These provide two sets of markings for the skips.

Workbench Miniatures' Modern Image Skip Set is a versatile accessory that will lend interest to military or civilian scenes; or might be the centrepiece for a vignette of its own. Although the scale is quoted as 1:35, the skips will also be suitable for other scales such as 1:48 and 1:32 due to the wide variety of styles and sizes of the full-sized skips.

Highly Recommended.

Workbench Miniatures products may be seen on their blog - workbenchminiatures.blogspot.com and may be ordered direct by email - spencerpollard1@gmail.com

Brett Green



ITALERI

1:35 SCALE LONG DOCK KIT NO. 5612

Italeri's latest addition to its line has, I assume, been designed with its range of 1:35 boats in mind. That said, it will be pretty useful for any dockside scene that you want to present.

64 parts make up this kit, which include two identical sprues as well as a length of rope. Detail throughout is very good, and the painted example on the boxart shows this to full effect. The moulded on train lines and metal grates would indicate that, geographically, it is best suited for European or North African settings but I guess that somewhere in the Pacific there is a dock just like this!

Moulded in light grey plastic, the two dock sections are huge when joined - 60cm in length and 20cm in depth. The ladder rungs are optional; you have the choice of opening up their location holes or not. Strangely though you only get enough ladder rungs in the kit (8) to fit out just one of the modules. Mooring bollards, gangplanks and wood-effect risers are provided so, all in all, you have a great backdrop for your MTB, submarine or human chariot.

If I had one complaint it is that no sides or back are provided so you will have to blank those off yourself if you want the dock to look solid. Other than that it is a simple kit that offers great diorama potential, plus it is very easy to construct.

In all, it took me about three hours to build this with another half hour to clean the parts up when glued together. The fit of everything is very good. The only time consuming part that I found was sanding down the seam lines on the four bollards. The two dock halves are fixed together by means of two large plastic joiners that will give a solid connection. A bit of filler will be needed but that is to be expected. I have yet to see if any of the many rolling stock kits fit the gauge of the track provided so I cannot comment.

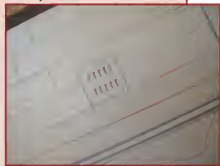
This is a large kit when completed, but simple to put together. Your MTB or Schnellboot needs this!

Highly recommended. Thanks to Italeri for the sample www.italeri.com

Graham Tetley



Boat Ahoy!



Grate detail.



Stairway to heaven.



Something to tie your boat to.



Dock detail.



To give you an idea of size...

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Book Reviews



TRACKSTORY NO. 13 - LE CHAR B1

TEXT BY PASCAL DANJOU
PROFILES BY ERIC SCHWATZ
ISBN: 978 2 917661 15 4
PUBLISHED BY EDITIONS DU BARBOTIN

"Le Char B1" is the 13th in Edition Du Barbotin's Trackstory series covering important French and German tanks. The book is presented in a small format similar in size to Osprey titles, with soft covers and 62 glossy pages. The Char B1 was arguably the best heavy tank in service at the outbreak of the Second World War. It boasted thick armour, a powerful 7.5cm hull-mounted howitzer and a 47mm anti-tank gun in a fully traversing turret that was capable of dealing with most German tanks of the day. A separate (i.e. not co-axial) machine gun was also fitted to the turret. However, the Char B1 was slow, mechanically complex and expensive to build when the tactical trend was moving toward massed tank units rather than breakthrough vehicles employed in small numbers. The small one-man turret also meant that the overstretched Commander was not only in charge of the tank, but also had to load and fire the 47 mm anti-tank gun. Although the Char B1 managed a good number of individual successes and heroic actions, its sporadic deployment and obsolescent design meant that they were eventually overwhelmed. Even so, Germany repaired and employed a number of Char B1 tanks after the fall of France. This newest book in the Trackstory series features bi-lingual text in two columns, with French to the left and English on the right. Captions are similarly organised. The first 50 pages cover the birth of the battle tank; development of the Char B1; and operational history in WWII. The balance of the book, from pages 51 to 62, contains attractive and inspiring artwork covering the camouflage and markings of the Char B1. Each colour side profile is supported by a historical photograph and descriptive text. There is one profile on each page. I really like the format of the Trackstory series for modellers. The compact size will fit easily on your modelling desk, while the profiles are large enough to see plenty of detail. The photos are relevant and useful; while the text is concise but interesting. My only suggestion for future titles is that it would be nice to have four (or five) view camouflage diagrams, especially considering the complex patterns on these early-war French tanks. This is a handy and compact source on the Char B1 that will be a useful reference with ample inspiration for some colourful camouflage finishes. Trackstory No.13, Char B1 is available online from MiniTracks website www.minitracks.fr. Highly Recommended.

Brett Green



PANTHER - GERMANY'S QUEST FOR COMBAT DOMINANCE

BY MICHAEL AND GLADYS GREEN
ISBN: 978 1 84908 841 1
OSPREY PUBLISHING

The Panther tank was undeniable one of the most elegant design of WWII. It embodied a balance of firepower, armour protection, and mobility unmatched by any other tank of the period. Yet, it was not the war-winner it might have been.

Author Mike Green examines the disparity between the potential of the Panther design and the actuality of the fielded Panther tank in his new book, "Panther - Germany's Quest for Combat Dominance". This new title comprises 288 glossy pages between hard covers. The book is packed with photographs, split between wartime reference images and colour detail photos of surviving Panthers in museums and in private collections. The photographs are large and the quality of reproduction is very high. Captions are detailed and helpful.

Although many viewed the Panther as an engineering masterpiece and a technological breakthrough, the Panther failed to meet expectations on the battlefield, thereby crushing Hitler's dreams of world domination. Green explores the evolution - and devolution - of the Panther, providing keen insight and new reasons for its ultimate failure.

Following the Acknowledgements and Introduction, the contents are logically broken down into the following Chapters:

- Background
- Firepower
- Protection
- Mobility
- Variants

Although this title is targeted more toward historians and fans of the full-sized vehicle, the ample number of photographs and some of the first-hand information contained in the text will be of interest to modellers too. Recommended.

Thanks to Osprey Publishing for the sample www.ospreypublishing.com
Brett Green

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INTERVIEWING AN ICON

Model Military International Interview with Francois Verlinden

This month, I will dispense with my opening comments and start with an interview with a man who I consider an icon within the industry. His work with resin aftermarket accessories and "how to" books changed the face of the hobby forever. I, for one, have been influenced by his work, and in this interview it is interesting to see how he too was influenced by others. I found Mr Verlinden to be an insightful and fascinating interviewee. It is a great pleasure to interview him this month.

THE INTERVIEW

Luke: Mr Verlinden, It is a real pleasure to have you with us this month. For the benefit of our readers, can you tell us about your early career and how it all started?

Francois: First of all Luke, call me Francois, I was born in 1946 in Belgium. My father had a scrap metal business that kept him busy for several years, cutting up all kinds of military hardware. Sometimes, he took me with him. I remember vaguely, playing soldier with those old WWII wrecks. Perhaps those early impressions played a role in my interest in military equipment. At around 12 years of age I bought my first kit, (an Aurora Panther) and from that day forward, I have never stopped modelling. School was not my thing, so my Dad took me into his business. He taught me to work hard and, more importantly, the basic principles of running a business. When I was 25 my father died unexpectedly and the business was thrown into my lap. At that point, my modelling had evolved so I decide to learn photography, my goal, was to have my models published in magazines. Tamiya and Italeri were impressed with my work and promptly published them. I built a lot of dioramas for Tamiya which are still displayed in the Tamiya building in Japan. In what seemed a very short time I became a well known in the modelling world and decided to quit the scrap business and to build a career in modelling.

Luke: I have always been impressed with your resin casting. In your early years your casting was always first rate and in most cases a cut above the rest. I would imagine a lot of trial and error was involved. Can you tell our readers how this process was developed?

Francois: When I started, the option for a specialised hobby store seemed to be the first logical step (to ensure basic income) while working on my first book. My models were on display in the store that, by chance, attracted modellers from all over Europe. One has to remember that in those early days there were hardly any figures or diorama accessories available. I endeavoured to make my own and use them in my dioramas that were on display in



Luke Pitt hosts MMI's examination of the growing world of 1:48 scale military models, figures and accessories.

the shop. Customers thought they were kits and wanted to buy them. One of my customers (a chemical engineer) explained to me that I should make RTV moulds of the originals and cast them in either resin or ceramics. This, as they say, was truly a "light bulb" moment and set my life in a different direction. At the time, the big problem was air bubbles in the castings. After many months of trial and error I found a solution and built myself a system using vacuum power. A well-organised production system was implemented. Success was fairly rapid. Model clubs from all over Europe hired small buses to visit my shop and the store was filled with modellers buying stockpiles of the items they were looking for. They in turn, showed these to their local hobby stores in their respective countries. Much to my surprise, our store received requests from these stores and local distributors. The rest is history. The store became too small for housing the fast growing range of products and a 10,000 square foot industrial building was constructed that (due to demand) needed a 20,000 square foot extension 3 years later. I had to close the store due to lack of time which was a pity really, because that is where I learned what modellers wanted and I think, at the time, I supplied them with that.

Luke: Who were your main influences as a young modeller and who do you admire now?

Francois: My biggest inspiration came from Shep Paine. I saw his work from the inserts in the Monogram kits in the 1970s. He explained in a simple way how to dry brush, how to apply washes, paint figures and build dioramas. His Monogram Inserts really got me going. Over the intervening years I have seen some awesome modellers and painters. Too many (to be honest) to list, but I have never seen such a high standard in modelling as there is today. I enjoy and admire all of them.

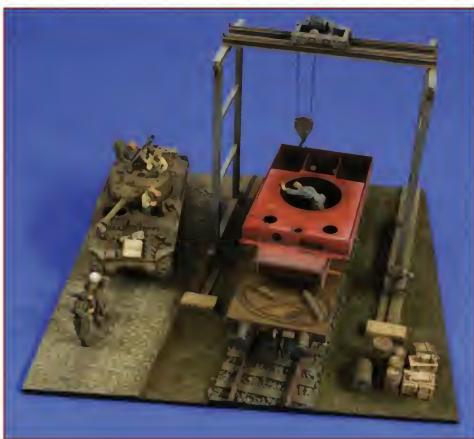
Luke: The words "resin update" seems to be synonymous with Verlinden. Can you tell our readers how this idea first came to you, as I believe your firm was one of the first to introduce the concept?

Francois: As I am a modeller myself and the update sets came from the need for detailed parts for myself. I found over time, that when I need something a lot of modellers seemed to need them also. It started when plastic kits were not as good as they are today.

Luke: Verlinden was one of the first companies to introduce resin figures to the mainstream. Tell our readers what was your motivation to introduce this line?

Francois: I needed a better figure for myself and because in those early days there were NO decent figures except some white metal. Resin (by its very nature) is a lot easier to work with (in its finished form) than white metal, so the choice was a natural one.

Luke: Interesting. On a different topic I have often discussed "styles" of model building and yours was and is, often imitated what are your thoughts on the various styles of modelling and indeed who do you believe are shaping the hobby now?



Francois: I have seen so many new styles and so called new "buzz" words like "filters" etc. which (in reality) are nothing more than washes. "Buzz words" are just that, it merely makes the product easier to sell. It seems for every colour tint, you can buy a filter. I believe that every modeller has to figure out what works best for him. How you do it, does not matter, it is the final result that counts. I still work with enamels because it gives me flexibility. They mix with oil paints and can be reactivated with thinner. They absorb washes which is the closest to the natural aging and weathering process (in my view). Acrylics never worked for me. Who is shaping the hobby now? I believe modellers are doing it, themselves, now, through the internet, a tool they never had before.

Luke: You raise some good points there. I have often said it all about "what works for you". Changing the mood a little, I believe that Verlinden was one of the first manufacturers to see the need for high quality 1:48 scale figures and indeed full aftermarket 1:48 scale military kits. What was your motivation there?

Francois: My strategy has always been to create a concept. For example, we designed and produced everything to make dioramas for air bases, giving the modeller all kind of accessories and figures to make it possible.

Luke: Will you be introducing any more 1:48 scale products in the future? I have often thought a good line of aftermarket heads, hands and boots would work well in 1:48. Indeed, there may even be a market for boats in this scale (not too big or too small)

Francois: For the moment no. On the other hand I love 1:48 scale armour. It is simple to build and a lot of fun. There are several reasons why I have placed 1:48 on hold. Believe me we have tried to spark interest in it, in fact we have quite a lot of products in the scale, but alas they are not performing. For example 1:48 scale R&D cost more or less the same as 1:35 scale but, one cannot charge the same retail price as we do for 1:35. The only real saving (from a production standpoint) is in the raw materials and to be honest, RTV and resin does not make a serious difference in the retail cost. Perhaps if the market share expands over time we will increase the line.

Luke: On a final note, can you give our readers your views on the hobby as you see it, where it's come from and where it might be heading?

Francois: I am pretty optimistic about the future of modelling and indeed 1:48 scale. There has never been so much on offer. The quality is getting better all the time. Reflecting on what it was 40 years ago, to what it is today. There is no comparison; it is like a dream come true. Thanks for having me Luke





S.B.S. MODEL

48032 1:48 Kfz. 385 Tankwagen DETAIL SET FOR ITALERI OPEL BLITZ (6604)
48033 1:48 Kfz. 385 T-STOFF Tankwagen CONVERSION SET FOR ITALERI OPEL BLITZ KIT (6606)

S.B.S. Model from Hungary is a relatively new company that has released some very nice detail and conversion sets for 1:48 and 1:72 aircraft. These two sets for Italeri's 1:48 Opel Blitz (as well as Tamiya's boxing) are their first forays into military vehicle sets, although they still have a strong aviation connection. Both sets are multimedia, including resin, photo-etch, a length of solder for fuel lines and an acetate film for the instrument panel. Casting of the resin parts is impeccable, with sharp details, no warpage, and easily removed pour plugs, while the photo-etch has crisp raised details. The instructions, although simple, are clearly laid out and easy to follow.

First up is a detail set for Italeri's Kfz. 385 Tankwagen, the soft-cab fuel truck kit. This set includes 26 finely moulded resin parts, plus the photo-etched fret, solder and acetate film. The resin parts let you open up the refuelling controls, including the various pumps and fittings, along with connectors and nozzles for the fuel lines, while the photo-etched parts are mostly cab details, including wipers, mirrors, foot pedals, the instrument panel and the ever-present "Opel Blitz" logo for the grille. This simple to use set is perfect if you want to depict your Blitz doing its job, actually refuelling an aircraft.

The other set is for a more exotic version, the T-Stoff tanker that supported Me 163 Komet and V-2 missile operations. This conversion, intended for the cargo version of the Opel Blitz (all of the photos of these vehicles I have seen had a solid cab), includes a complete fuel tank assembly, including mounting brackets, pumps, fuel lines, new spare wheel stowage bracket, and other fittings, as well as all of the cab details included in the tanker detail set. The conversion itself is quite simple: just leave off the cargo bed and all associated mounting brackets, then add the fuel tank assembly and detail parts to the cab. The only problem is that the T-Stoff tankers vehicles should have the later 8-bolt wheels, not the 6-bolt wheels that are included in the Italeri kit.

Some photos also show these vehicles built on the 3,6 6700-A 4x4 chassis [this was useful for the vehicles supporting V-2 operations], so one could combine this conversion with Gas O-Line's 6700-A conversion to make one of those vehicles. A 8-Bolt tanker would be nice to go with this for V-2s, while a C-Stoff tanker is needed to top up the Komets.

Both of these sets are highly recommended and should be of interest to both aircraft and armour modellers, although as mentioned a set of 8-bolt wheels will have to be sourced for the T-Stoff conversion [these would be useful for the straight tanker as well, but not necessary].

Highly Recommended.

Thanks to S.B.S. Model for the review samples www.sbsmodel.com

Scott Taylor

Sneak Preview

1:48 SCALE HEADS

We have a sneak preview of aftermarket 1:48 scale heads that will be available in the coming months. Stay tuned for more details about availability in a coming issue of Model Military International magazine.



CMK

VW AND KUBELWAGEN UPDATES

These CMK updates have been around for quite some time but it is the first chance that we have had to review them in this column. The sets are:

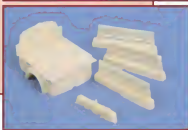
- Set 8004 Kubelwagen Holz gas conversion
 - Set 8023 VW Type 82 Holz gas conversion
 - Set 8024 VW Type 82 Holz Reichspost conversion
 - Set 8024 VW Type 82 Pickup conversion
- All of the sets come in the now familiar yellow blister packs with detailed instructions in each; the casting quality on all the conversions is first rate and has no bubbles or blemishes of any kind. Some, like the Kubelwagen, come with a small photo-etched fret while the Type 82 come with a decal sheet for either the Reichspost or ambulance versions. From a brief dry fit of the respective parts, all the sets seem very accurate and fit well to their intended Tamiya kits. If you are like me and love anything to do with Volkswagens, then these sets are an absolute must.

Highly Recommended.

Thanks to CMK for the review samples

www.cmkkits.com/ev/

Luke Pitt



PLUS MODELS

CHAPEL WITH CROSS. ITEM NO. 4036

CHAPEL ITEM NO. 4044

Plus Model from the Czech Republic has created two new diorama items in 1:48 scale. Both are of religious shrines that would be found along main roads travelled by pilgrims and conquering (or retreating) armies alike. The "Chapel with Cross" (#4036) is a four piece kit of a small shrine with clay tile roof, stone stand, and tall metal cross. These high quality cast resin pieces are bubble free as is the standard from Plus Model.

The kit does not come with instructions or details, as none are needed. The cross itself is finely detailed and is mounted on a small inset pedestal found at the base of the shrine.

The Chapel (#4044) is a smaller shrine made of the same high quality grey resin. This shrine also has four pieces creating a tall narrow structure with a small clay tile roof. The image of the completed structure shows a small picture painted in the center of the upper portion of the shrine. Although no decals are included with the kit, a little web search should yield an appropriate image to print, cut out and attach.

Either of these shrines would enhance your diorama depicting an advancing German army pausing along a dusty road somewhere in Western Russia, or Allied forces making their way through Italy. Both these kits are recommended.

Thanks to Plus Models for the samples www.plusmodel.cz

Darrick Christensen

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Javier Redondo Gimenez kitbashes two
Trumpeter kits to come up with 1:35
scale KV-8 Flamethrower.



BABY LEOPARD

Andy King builds HobbyBoss'
1:35 KV1602 Leopard.

SHERMAN DEVASTATOR

Yes, it really existed!
Kamil Feliks Sztarbala
creates a 1:35 scale
T31 demolition tank.



LIGHT HORSE

Andrew Judson builds and
paints AC Models' large-scale
WWI bust.



Next Issue

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lenses. Please always model
in safety!

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projects, but we'll try our best!



The Last Post..



Final drive housings



Several different styles of drive sprockets are included.

DRAGON 1:35 STUG III G AUSF. G DEC 1943 PRODUCTION KIT NO. 6581

Graham Tetley examines the latest StuG III from Dragon.

Dragon's latest addition to their StuG III family comprises of approximately 720 parts, of which about 60 are unused, and is molded in their typical blemish free style. All parts are crisply detailed and, having built a standard StuG III some years ago, I am certain that the parts fit will be excellent.

This kit is intended to represent a particular version that was manufactured within a certain timeframe at the MIAG factory. As such it should really have Zimmerit on it, so if this bothers you then don't buy it. Also, you would need to use the tubular track guard support brackets (Parts G32 & 33) instead of the pressed steel parts L5, and replace the cast 'Topfblende mantlet Part F27 with the welded & bolted version on sprue F. However, these omissions are somewhat balanced out by the main specific features being included, which are the correct, MIAG-type, return rollers, new drive sprockets and new transmission housings with separate bolt detail.

So, those issues aside, what do you get for your money? Well, if you have built a Dragon StuG IIG before then 95% of this kit will be familiar to you. Construction starts with the lower hull and running gear and Dragon provide us with working torsion bars if you want to have your suspension sprung. The idler wheel comes with etched inserts for added

detail, and the roadwheels have the standard 'CONTINENTAL' stamped on them.

From here, everything is built as sub-assemblies that are all joined in Step 18. The fenders are provided as separate parts and a full complement of tools with molded-on clasps is provided. As an added bonus, Sprue G includes a spare set of tools (2 each of a shovel, axe and crowbar) to go straight into your spare box. A length of metal wire is provided for the tow shackles, which themselves are pre-drilled for ease. Whilst the etched fret provides various grilles, fender supports and the inserts for the idlers please remember that this is still a 'Smart Kit' so all of the tool clasps are in plastic.

Moving onto the superstructure, a very detailed interior is provided. The cupola is a multi-part marvel with clear plastic periscopes provided. A full radio rack is there, along with separate strips to represent where the superstructure is bolted to the hull. The superstructure floor, gun base and breech are fully detailed, and included in this kit are two crew MP40's that, whilst not in the instructions, should be fitted. The interior is missing the drivers compartment, ammunition stowage, gas mask containers and ammunition for the MP40's, but what we do have is an interior that is busy enough when viewed through the roof hatches. As mentioned above, whilst the

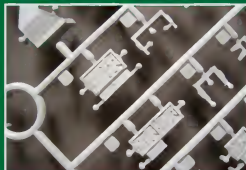
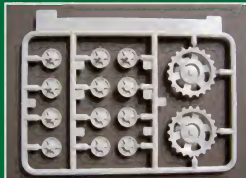
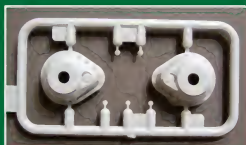
instructions have you use the cast mantlet in Step 16 you can use the bolted version provided - the gun barrel fits either part. The muzzle brake is slide molded with a separate internal locking ring. Very nice!

Turning to the engine deck, the hatches have detail inside and out. This gives you the option of fitting an aftermarket engine and transmission if you so desire. Two spare roadwheels and their securing pins are there, as are the locks for the front transmission hatches.

Dragon gives you a set of their multi-coloured Magic Tracks which represent the 40cm type with hollow guide horns. Very fine, but noticeable, knock-out pin marks are on the track's running surfaces and ideally these need to be cleaned, but the choice is yours.

Finishing off the kit are the mounts for the Schurzen. The Schurzen itself comes fixed to the 'Goody bag' and is made from pre-stamped metal for scale thickness. I have to say that these are very nice, perhaps my favourite part of the kit.

So, to summarise, we have a kit that falls somewhat short of what it is supposed to represent, but aside from the Zimmerit corrections are in the box. I like my StuG's, and no-one does them better than Dragon. If you can work around the Zimmerit issue then this is another fine and worthwhile kit to add to your collection. ■



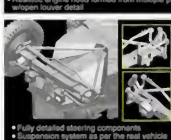
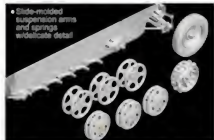
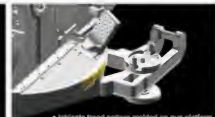
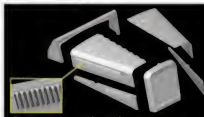
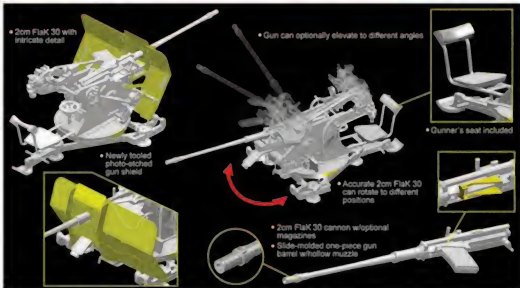
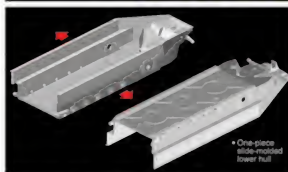
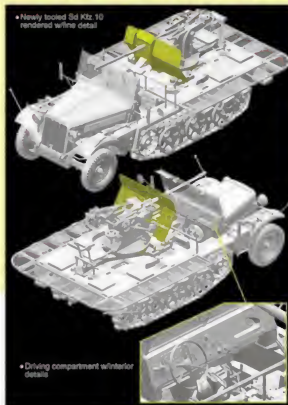
Sd.Kfz.10/4 für 2cm Flak 30 1939 Production

Engineered for modelling enjoyment

Plastic parts with enhanced detail

Unprecedented value

Ready for immediate assembly



SEND HER VICTORIOUS



1/48 Scale Matilda Mk.III/IV British Infantry Tank Mk.IIA*

Item 32572



The Matilda was a British infantry tank which was known for its exploits on the North African front in the early years of WWII. At the time, the Matilda was impervious to any opposing tank or anti-tank gun, and it was respectfully referred to as the "Queen of the Desert" by German and Italian forces. This important tank is now available as an assembly kit in Tamiya's 1/48 Scale Military Miniature Series. From the shape of its hull and turret to the armored skirts which protected its suspension, the distinguishing features of the Matilda have been accurately reproduced in this compact, 127mm long model. The kit also comes with three marking options, including tanks which fought in North Africa. Build this model together with its nemesis, the German 88mm gun, to create a stunning desert diorama.

MATILDA Mk.III/IV BRITISH INFANTRY TANK Mk.IIA*

49th Royal Tank Regt., 35th Tank Bgd.,
England 1942

32nd Tank Bgd.,
Libya 1941



Commander torso
figure included.

Engine deck is
exquisitely detailed.

Hull and turret feature
realistic cast metal texture.



Weights inside the hull give
the model greater heft.

Length: 127mm

Assembly-type tracks feature
one-piece straight sections.

*Product may vary from images shown.
*Images show assembled and painted model kit.

**1/48
MM**
MILITARY MINIATURE MODEL

Desert Adversaries in 1/48 Scale

Display the Matilda with other models in Tamiya's 1/48 Scale MM Series such as the British Crusader tank and German 88mm Flak37.



Item 32541 Crusader Mk.I/II British Cruiser Tank Mk.VI



Item 32555 Crusader Mk.III British Cruiser Tank Mk.VI



Item 32529 German Tiger I Initial Production (Africa-Corps)



Item 37009 German 88mm Gun Flak37 "Siege of Tobruk"